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QUARTERLY / \$1.25 / AUTUMN 1961

Plaudits

Albert Herzing's five poems in the Spring 1961 *Review* are included in his first book of poems, *The Mother of the Amazons*, published last month (Scribners: Poets of Today series).

Langston Hughes' "Story for a Midget" (Autumn 1960) will be reprinted in a forthcoming number of the *Negro Digest*.

Kaatje Hurlbut's story, "The Vestibule" (Spring 1960), is reprinted in *The Best American Short Stories 1961* (Houghton Mifflin), edited by Martha Foley and David Burnett.

Charles Norman's poem, "To a Certain Critic" (Autumn 1958), will be included in his *Selected Poems*, to be published in January 1962 (Macmillan).

Two of the three John M. Ridland poems in the Spring 1961 *Review* are included in his first book of poems, *Fires of Home*, published last month by Scribners (Poets of Today series).

Mark Schorer's essay, "The Humiliation of Emma Woodhouse" (Summer 1959), will be reprinted in a forthcoming collection of Jane Austen criticism, *Twentieth Century Views* (Prentice-Hall paperback series).

The Turkish number of *The Literary Review* (Winter 1960-61) has been reviewed enthusiastically by leading Turkish newspapers, journals and radio programs and by many newspapers and magazines in other parts of the world. *The Foreign Service Journal*, published by the American Foreign Service Association, writes in its June number:

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Announcements

Albert Herzing, a member of the editorial board of *The Literary Review*, is editing a special number that features poets under forty years of age, to be published, we plan, late in 1962. Long as well as short poems will be considered. Manuscripts should be submitted directly to:

Mr. Albert Herzing
The Literary Review
Fairleigh Dickinson University
Teaneck, New Jersey

Unsolicited manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by stamped self-addressed envelope.

Due to the *Review's* increase in size and cost of publication, the annual subscription, effective with this number, is increased from \$4.00 to \$5.00 domestic, \$5.50 foreign. The new rates apply only to new subscriptions and renewals. The price of single copies is increased from \$1.00 to \$1.25 domestic, \$1.35 foreign.

The forthcoming winter number of the *Review* will feature the contemporary writing of the Netherlands. It is the sixth in a series of foreign numbers published from time to time. Foreign numbers previously published were devoted to India, Israel, Italy, the Philippines, and Turkey. Foreign numbers in progress will be devoted to Japan, Mexico, and the Arab countries. These foreign numbers have proved so popular, both here and abroad, that all of them are now collector's items. A number of schools, colleges and universities are using them either as textbooks or supplementary reading.

THE LITERARY REVIEW

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Of the World

FAZIL HÜSNÜ DAĞLARCA

Translated from the Turkish by Anil Meriçelli and F. Engin

Here, in India, in Africa,
Everything looks like everything else.
Here, in India, in Africa,
Love for corn is the same,
The thought of death is the same.

Whatever language he speaks,
His eyes will tell you what he says.
Whatever language he speaks,
To the same winds I hear
He listens.

We human beings are separated,
The lines of countries divide our happiness;
We human beings are separated:
The brotherhood of birds in the sky
And of wolves on the earth.

The Magician's Art

HEIMITO VON DODERER

Translated from the German by Astrid Ivask

TO PAN, the great god of summer, sacrificial offerings of camphor and naphthalene are brought by the city; the cool fragrance is pleasing to him in abandoned, half-darkened habitations, circling the shrouded furniture as a faintest whiff. Meanwhile the inhabitants of such rooms are walking in real woods, or standing in gardens on very narrow gravel paths between flower-beds adorned with glass globes of various colours. Dark woods encircle the foot of the distant mountain range like a discarded garment; rocks, already bare, shimmer milky and mild under the high summer skies, accented only here and there by a patch of snow.

The city has sunk below the horizon. In this heat she sinks into herself and becomes lonely, because so many have left her, and becomes lonelier still above the steaming asphalt, even though hundreds and thousands of people are still running and riding about. The city is in a meditative mood. She now has many hollow spaces for withdrawal, caverns and cavities, shaded and freshly camphorized. At long last furniture attains to a life of its own. But the city's meditations are not confined to sealed-off chambers alone. In front of a small inn, "To the City of Paris," tables with shiny beer-mugs are standing on the sidewalk of a by-street. A cool and cellary smell wafts from the vaults, a smell of barrels perhaps, of wine-casks and beer barrels. Only now does one notice that the moon has risen above the street. The evening stays very warm.

Summer in the hot streets of Vienna is not the best of seasons for innkeepers, even though the heat makes beer flow more abundantly, especially when the temperature reaches six mugs in the shade, as a local saying has it. Daily a stream of people leaves the city after working hours, not to mention weekends, when the Vienna Woods drain the capital of inhabitants altogether. The breezy vine-

yard inns are favoured on account of their arbours, where moonlight transforms the jagged grape-leaves into paper cut-outs or, on occasion, into the metallic rigidity of tin.

A stream of people abandons the city, which then begins to meditate in the forsaken inns and among the tables and potted laurel trees on a sidewalk.

The young innkeeper of "The City of Paris" and his wife were determined to get things going again after a succession of hot days that were continuing obstinately, as if intending to chase the very last customer into the verdure of the Prater or to the "Heuriger"¹ in the suburb of Sievering. It would certainly take some doing to counteract this pitiful state of affairs! But since an innkeeper knows most of his customers rather intimately, he also commands a wealth of personal contacts, maybe more so than any other kind of businessman, thus having connections with all sorts of professions and walks of life, down to the very oddest. This is especially true if the innkeeper himself has an attractive and pleasing personality, as was certainly the case with Franz Blauensteiner, not to speak of his beautiful wife Elly, who in addition to a typically Viennese plumpness displayed a pair of shapely legs and thus, as a fair specimen of Viennese womanhood, bounced busily and merrily about the inn.

They knew everyone. And more than that: they recognized, sooner or later, everybody's real worth. They recognized, for instance, the exact relationship of an engaged couple whose feminine half had dyed her hair a fashionable Titian red, matching it with slacks and a loud shirt, while her partner, gentle and quiet, was always seen in one and the same respectable, though ill-fitting dress-suit. He was an employee of a private firm and devoted nearly all of his leisure hours to the peaceful art of bee-keeping, which is a fair indication that this young man was an introspective sort of character. She, on the other hand, would have much preferred riding a motorcycle, since she belonged, even in the absence of such a vehicle, basically to that group of people who keep up with the times, in other words, have a great capacity for making noise, with whatever apparatus

¹ *Heuriger* is the new wine, traditionally enjoyed in the open at simple vineyard inns and sold by the grower himself on the very spot of its origin.

might best suit the case. "How in the world did she get hold of him, of all people?" "It's just the attraction of opposites," was Mrs. Elly's opinion, and furthermore: "She has bagged him safely, and it is evident who has the upper hand. She would not think of giving up that." "He probably has a lot of money and she knows it," said the innkeeper, whose opinions on the motives of human behavior were clearly down-to-earth. His wife, though no less outspoken, proceeded with more consideration, and ultimately penetrated deeper. Only as a team did they make a first-rate psychologist.

Thus they soon knew all there was to know about their male and female customers, their sore spots as well as what they took most pride in, be it a photograph of one's aunt, because she had been the widow of an Imperial and Royal Captain or, be it, as in the case of the old retired cloak-room attendant of the Vienna Court Opera, her intimacy with famous stage artists of her time ("such voices as in my time you just don't hear today"), this being documented by a vast number of photographs, complete with dedications. Through large, gold-rimmed spectacles the face of a bygone time seemed to be gazing at one, while reminiscences poured forth, the face of a time which, even while it lasted, was ultimately more preoccupied with the business of social appearances than with that of existence. . . . Then there was the fat little wife of a Civil Servant, her face all nose and looking exactly like a hoopoe. Her daughter appeared so satisfied with the world around her, her dachshund and, above all, herself, that the very world around her could hardly stand it; furthermore we must mention the civil engineer Anton Rieger, ever alone and ever a trifle sad, a truly handsome man, and head of a thriving business firm besides. The Blauensteiners knew him perhaps of all their customers most profoundly and could tell from slight indications, occurring toward midnight—certain gestures of his hands, maybe, and the recurrence of certain words—that his way home that night would be that of a straying star through the night and nightclubs of the city; this fate befell the inveterate bachelor from time to time.

We shall meet several other customers, but only after the magician's performance by which the Blauensteiners meant to awaken the place to life again in spite of the heat of July. They had, of course, connections even to this out-of-the-way profession, which is, never-

theless, a great favourite with the Viennese and has in that city a particularly venerable tradition. Around 1870 or '80 there lived in Vienna the famous Kratki-Baschik who, by changing the final vowel of his Bohemian name, Kratky, and by adding the incomprehensible "Baschik," had arrived at an Arabian or Turkish sounding name, in short, an Oriental one. There does exist in Turkish a word somewhat similar to "Baschik," but of vastly different meaning. . . . Well, what difference did it make! Everybody knew Kratki-Baschik in those days. He resided in the Wurstelprater, the beloved amusement park, and was a magician by profession and owner of a collection of curiosities besides. All kinds of rarely seen things, preserved in alcohol, were on view there. Down to this day any somewhat weird fellow is characterized by the saying: "He belongs in Kratki-Baschik's collection." His pupils and followers in the second and third generation have multiplied and increased in numbers manifold; they organize conventions and contests; few of them are magicians by profession and earn their living as prominent exponents of this art; most are amateurs, although some have developed their art to a high degree of excellence.

Mr. Blauensteiner had procured himself the services of one such amateur and on the appointed night there was only standing room left at the inn, since the magician charged no fee, obliging everyone by a free performance. One might have called him a Sunday magician, as we are used to talking about Sunday painters. This one was a Senior Secretary of the Magistrate by profession. The magician's art involves, by the way, considerable expense, for even a magician cannot get around money and conjure up something out of nothing. The required paraphernalia can, besides being expensive, also be rather complex and even bulky. The crowd watched them being brought in: coffers, tubular pipes, even an odd-looking piece shaped like an old-fashioned contraption for giving electrical treatment, complete with circular window and shining brass parts. The evening was a big success, not only for the innkeeper, but also for the gentleman who so obligingly displayed his art, wearing a detachable white goatee during the performance. Mr. Blauensteiner called this regular customer, whose name was a little difficult to remember, from now on only "Kratki-Baschik," having found out where the gentleman's

sympathies lay.

Soon after the beginning of the presentation such feats of magic were performed by this rather important official of the Civil Service, that the audience had forcefully to remind itself of its being all the result of manual dexterity and a skillful display of tricks. Yet even this rational explanation seemed, for several moments, to be suspended. This happened when a beautiful, colored silk handkerchief of a young gentleman and a twenty-shilling bill of another were chopped and torn to bits in an apparatus—both men silently gave their possessions up for lost—only to be extracted, completely intact and under the very eyes of some spectators: the bill from the inn-keeper's bushy hair and the handkerchief from the collar of his shirt. An enormous burst of laughter, applause, and many exclamations of surprise followed. The official of the Magistrate was profusely thanked for the very entertaining evening. The performance having lasted long enough, the consumption of drink keeping pace with the general enthusiasm, he could now pack up his curious and complicated equipment and call for a taxi. The crowd of patrons soon dispersed itself.

At the table of regular customers, only a few people remained with the host and hostess, some already known to us such as the ill-matched lovers and the civil engineer Rieger. Hoopoe, dachshund-daughter, and the member of the Vienna State Opera of the good old days were missing, and in view of the events that followed, we may call their absence a lucky coincidence. Not even the gold-rimmed spectacles of the *ancien régime* had accidentally been left at the inn, which circumstance often resulted in the lady's calling for them on the same evening. "Evening" would, in this case, hardly have done justice to the advanced hour of the night, for it was very late. Despite this hour, still present was a retired University Professor, Dr. Hugo Winkler, a gentleman commonly said to be seventy or more years of age, which seemed a correct assumption on account of his retirement; the gentleman himself, however, and especially his manner of speaking contradicted all evidence and made the above conjecture appear downright incredible: in his dialectics and wilfulness he outdid a debating society, while in his capacity for enthusiasm he put a dozen secondary pupils to shame. Present was

also a writer, a certain Dr. Döblinger. There is, admittedly, always a writer present. This one shared the whim of his profession: he did not much care to be addressed by his academic title; all writers evidently believe the splendour of their name sufficient to reduce to insignificance whatever titles they may possess.

"She is right, so very right!" cried the Professor emphatically, addressing the hostess, who in his particular case showed more forbearance than actual agreement with his views. "She is absolutely right!" (He was talking about the Titian-dyed redhead in slacks.) "Extraordinary achievement is what makes a man! A woman must simply demand it of him. It matters not whether he be a boxer, a poet, or a magician. But achieve the extraordinary he must! For the object of every endeavour is woman, nothing but woman, nothing else, nothing at all. What other ideals are there? What are you trying to tell me, gentlemen? Am I not right, Mr. Rieger? Woman is the goal of all human endeavour, woman alone!"

"Permit me, Professor," said Dr. Döblinger cautiously. "I cannot go along here without voicing an objection and venturing a counter-argument—"

"No objections, no arguments!" interrupted the Professor with animation, his smooth head popping up like that of an aquatic acrobat above water. "I do not tolerate arguments and objections! In this case truth is as clear as daylight. One must but make up one's mind to see it—"

While this kind of dialectics soon reduced the Doctor to silence, it was evident that the bridegroom and bee-keeper (in his respectable, though ill-fitting suit), who had continued in the lowest of spirits, was now sinking into quite a depression. We should not overlook here the implicit and by no means inconsiderable compliment to the Senior Secretary Kratki-Baschik, whose performance had touched off this conversation about things extraordinary in general and extraordinary achievement in particular. The Professor was, of course, always intent upon reducing everything to basic principles. Not so Anton Rieger. He had kept his wits about him during the performance, using his engineer's training to advantage, and had seen through and reconstructed for his own information three of the tricks down to the last detail. Yet he said nothing. Civil engineer

Rieger hardly ever said anything at all.

The Professor had, meanwhile, digressed from his recent argument in favour of dithyrambic exuberance on the following subject: "Didn't you all notice her? During the performance, I mean. I tell you, Mr. Rieger, what a woman! The most beautiful creature I ever saw. At the third table on the left—"

The conversation having reached this point, a silence ensued. The bee-keeper was by now completely wrapped up in his silent gloom. Poor fellow, who knows what imaginings were besetting him! His Titian-red bride took not the slightest notice of him, she did not glance at him once. She had been provoked (maybe by the Professor's speeches), she was in full sail, her bow high and erect, although not heaving with the waves. The bow of her future-bound vessel was, paradoxically, heaving all by itself.

The inn's wide-open doors admitted no coolness. The night continued very warm.

Not a drop of rain had fallen at the first stroke of lightning, and if a wind had arisen, it could not be felt indoors. Yet the blue flash outside was almost immediately followed by a violent clap of thunder. At that very moment a late customer entered the front room, occupied now only by the party at the table. It was a well-dressed gentleman, his face rather broad and smooth, with slightly slanting eyes. This became particularly evident after he had removed his hat, uncovering a highly domed forehead. He asked politely and in a low voice whether he could still get, in spite of the advanced hour, something to eat, even if it were but some cheese and butter. The innkeeper's wife bounced obligingly to the counter and the customer sat down at a neighbouring table. He ordered only mineral water and apple juice to drink.

As it usually happens when one enters an inn at a late hour, where only a few people are still sitting together, one easily gets drawn into conversation. Meanwhile the talk had reverted again, by one accidental remark or another, to *Kratki-Baschik*. This topic seemed to hold some, even if incidental interest for the newcomer; it was at any rate evident that he followed the conversation in which now the Titian-dyed redhead also participated, after having observed the stranger for quite a while with interest and not very discreetly;

one had to admit that she watched him quite openly. Before he knew it, he was involved in the conversation, the innkeeper's wife herself providing him with some explanation of the evening's happenings, not forgetting to mention the excellence of the presentation they all had seen. The new customer was just getting ready to answer her, when he was asked by the innkeeper to join them. He accepted and carried his glass to their table. The innkeeper's wife continued her praises of the Senior Secretary's artistry, mentioning also his name and position.

"Yes," said the newcomer. "I know him. An excellent dilettante."

"Pardon me, dilettante—," laughed the innkeeper's wife. "Had I but a fraction of his ability!"

"Yes, indeed," said the stranger. "He is very good, this Mr. Blahoutek, and as amateurs go, one of the very best."

"Is the gentleman perhaps himself in this line of business?" inquired the innkeeper interestedly.

"Yes, indeed," was the reply.

"And what, if I may ask, is the difference, I mean: what distinguishes a professional from an amateur like Mr. Blahoutek?"

"Well, a dilettante may, in general, perform quite outstanding tricks, even of his own invention, but, naturally, he lacks the technique that only the most advanced professional training can give, he lacks real artistry."

"Well then: is the gentleman himself such an artist?"

The answer was in the affirmative.

"What a pity that the Senior Secretary took all of his possessions along!" cried the innkeeper. "Otherwise we could borrow one of his gadgets and the gentleman could oblige us with a beautiful piece of magic!"

"One does not always need gadgets," remarked the stranger in a casual tone of voice.

"Did you just now come from another restaurant here in the vicinity?" inquired the friendly Mrs. Blauensteiner.

"No, I was alone at home until now."

"Why!" exclaimed the lady. "Then you first went out as late as eleven o'clock?"

"Yes, I did," was the reply. By this time it dawned upon Dr.

Döblinger, and this by way of his nose (the nose of a writer is one of his tools and possesses a technique that only the most advanced professional training can give). From the very moment the stranger had sat down at their table, the author had been besieged by a vision of his own quiet, empty flat in the vicinity of the inn. So vivid and persistent was this vision that it nearly haunted him, appearing before his inner eye, accompanied by a very subtly piercing longing: the easy chairs, heavily shrouded against the dangerous attacks of moths, and a large wardrobe with mirrors, its tightly closed doors hiding the rugs, yet emitting from time to time the faintest whiff of camphor and naphthalene into the relative coolness of the room.

It was the height of summer, there was no denying it.

This fragrance was everywhere, hovering in flats that had withdrawn into themselves and away from the hot and noisy street. The fragrance almost seemed to spread a gospel of gentle detachment, inviting one to withdraw deeper still.

The stranger, too, came from such a solitary flat. One could smell this loneliness.

Meanwhile two or three flashes of lightning had been seen, accompanied by thunder, though less intense than the first time; a short rain now descended, its splashing soon giving way to silence again. Yet coolness now wafted from the street.

Franz Blauensteiner, the innkeeper, was not one to give up an idea easily; tonight he had quite made up his mind to see for himself whether the unknown artist could really outdo the Senior Secretary, and yet, as he said, without equipment. So he proceeded to ask the gentleman what was needed for the performance of his trick. "It will probably be easiest for you to find some old playing cards and a handful of nails, six to eight of them will do. The cards may just as well be old and dirty ones, they all fall to the floor in the end."

The requested items were brought. Suspense was mounting among the patrons. The stranger, sitting toward the end of the table and not very far from the panelled wall, handed the innkeeper and his wife the cards, casually requesting them to select one secretly, to keep it well in mind without removing it from the set, and to lay the whole pack of cards on the table in front of him.

This done, and the unknown customer having meanwhile paid

his moderate bill, he seized the nails in his left hand, the cards in his right, and threw or rather hurled both simultaneously against the panelled wall. The flock of cards dispersed, falling and gliding everywhere, onto the table, into the laps of the onlookers, down to the floor, followed by a clatter of falling nails. The next moment the innkeeper's wife uttered a shriek: on the wall, directly across from her, hung, face toward the room and pierced by a nail, the card she and her husband had chosen by secret agreement: the ten of spades. A dead silence followed. The stranger smiled obligingly, reached for his hat, bowed slightly, and left the inn. The Titian-red bride sat now stiffly erect and stared with wide-open eyes, her bow heaving heavily in his wake, even after he had disappeared from sight.

Within a minute of the stranger's departure, however, an even more surprising event took place. The bee-keeper suddenly started up from his gloomy brooding and ran out of the room. He did not bother to pick up his hat.

As we were able to learn from himself at a later date, he had indeed succeeded in catching a last glimpse of the stranger in the street, and had overtaken him at a running pace. This had been the stranger's reply to his stammered address: "Young man, great art should not be studied with a purpose in mind; even less for the purpose of winning a girl over; purpose kills art. May you bear this in mind."

Well, for the time being we were all still sitting together, minus artist and bee-keeper, whose return was expected by everyone very shortly. Yet, he did not turn up. The first conjectures were brought forth along with attempts to console or rather appease the Titian-red bride, who was beginning to show distinct signs of that rage to which we all fall prey so easily when we glance off the fine, yet absolutely inexorable borderline of our dominion. "Of course he will come," said the Professor. "He will be here presently." Things did not, however, take quite as natural a course. Little by little the situation was getting out of hand, threatening to degenerate into a disgrace for the redhead. Civil engineer Rieger's eyes grew somber and sad, as they always did when somebody was caught in an embarrassing situation. Then, shortly after the Professor's words, the telephone

rang. "It will be he," said Dr. Winkler. The innkeeper answered the call. It was he. The Titian-red bride disappeared into the booth. During their lengthy conversation not a word was said at the table; everything, including the Professor's pronouncements upon the natural course of human affairs, seemed to be hanging by a thread. The conversation went on forever. Finally she emerged. Her pallor escaped nobody's notice, nor did her altered looks: she was not a bit pretty now. She did not heave. Rather, her rage now burst the corset of respectability, she went to pieces before everybody's eyes. "What do you know," she cried—still by the booth, not even returned to the table. "That idiot has the nerve to tell me we are through, he never wants to see me again. . . ." Even the Professor could not get out his (though conceivably still possible) consolations, so he silently sank, smoothly shining head and all, below the surface of the conversation. The Titian-red bride left, not bothering about her bridegroom's hat. It was more a breaking with this circle (in which she was indeed never seen again) than leave-taking. After this the innkeeper tried again, unsuccessfully, to remove by hand the nail that still held the ten of spades. Everybody was unpleasantly affected by this card on the wall. Finally Blauensteiner got a small pair of pliers. Now it worked. "It serves her right," said Elly Blauensteiner after the Titian-dyed redhead had left. "He will certainly come back to her again," reiterated the Professor, still submerged. "He will never come back to her," answered Rieger. His words, though few, were true.

During the next few days the ten of spades on the wall—which must have had something of a Menetekel about it and therefore was so often alluded to—this ten of spades was simply talked to death. This seems to be the way of all great art: it is gnawed by tiny teeth until it falls to pieces and can be argued away; it is the fate of miracles, reduced to a miniature scale. Art and miracles cannot be part of life; they would grow unbearable, only to end as hard clods of the beyond in this world, crushing everything. Late in the night, after the accursed playing card had finally disappeared from the wall, the innkeeper Franz Blauensteiner sat a long time in silence, staring straight in front of him, until he finally summed it up: "This one was, of course, a—a different magician's art."

Note on Heimito von Doderer and the Austrian Novel

ASTRID IVASK

Within the larger framework of literature in the German language, an independent, original Austrian novelistic tradition is not more than a little over a century old. Adalbert Stifter's *The Indian Summer* (*Der Nachommer*, 1857) is the first significant achievement in this tradition, although Franz Grillparzer's long short story *The Poor Musician* (*Der arme Spielmann*, 1848) may be said to have been an equally important influence. Characteristically, these two prose works are already preoccupied with the problem of time which runs through all of Austrian literature. In spite of these interesting beginnings, one must yet admit that the actual fulfilment of the Austrian novel has come only in our century. This is not the place to analyze in detail the general influence that Vienna has exerted on the formation of the modern mind, an influence that can only be compared with that of Paris. We recall here but the fact that Psychoanalysis, Logical Positivism, and the twelve-tone system in music received decisive impulses from there. When limiting ourselves to the novel, the name of Franz Kafka comes first to mind among the prose writers born in the Austro-Hungarian empire. Rilke's sole novel, *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* (*Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge*, 1910) can be claimed as a forerunner of the existentialist novel. Other novelists are Robert Musil (1880-1942) and Hermann Broch (1886-1951) whose principal works are all available in excellent English translations; both tend towards cyclic novels. This can also be said about Heimito von Doderer, latest addition to the tradition of the Austrian novel sketched here.

Heimito von Doderer was born at Weidlingau, Lower Austria, in 1896. As a young officer during the first World War, he was taken prisoner and spent four years in Siberia. It was during this time that his bent for the novel became evident. After his return to Vienna, he studied History at the university and graduated with a Ph.D. His first publication was a collection of poems, *Streets and Landscape* (*Gassen und Landschaft*, 1923), followed in 1924 by a short novel, *The Breakthrough* (*Die Bresche*). None of his various shorter works before 1950, however, can be quite compared with the books that he has published during the last decade. As some other novelists in the past, Doderer is a striking example of slow and late maturing. His major work, the 1345-page novel, *The Demons* (*Die Dämonen*, 1956), was actually begun as early as 1931, yet it seems to have achieved its present final form largely due to the profound crisis Doderer underwent as a German officer during the second World War in Russia. His diaries, *The Tangents* (*Tangenten*, 1940-1950), will tell the story of these crucial years when published in

the near future. The thematically connected but shorter novels, *The Illuminated Windows* (*Die Herleuchteten Fenster*, 1950) and *The Strudlhofstiege* (*Die Strudlhofstiege*, 1951) present together with *The Demons* a sort of trilogy spanning the time from 1910-1927 and having as its protagonist the entire spectrum of Viennese society of that time. If Musil's monumental *The Man Without Qualities* (*Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, 1930-1943) analyzes philosophically the reasons for the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian empire during one fatal year, 1913/14, then Doderer concentrates more on the legacy left behind by this collapse in the new, drastically truncated republic of Austria. Doderer's *The Demons* is a scathing analysis of various fermenting revolutionary and totalitarian movements in pre-"Anschluss" Austria, consciously employing some devices developed by Dostoevsky in *The Possessed*.

The Austrian PEN-Club has recently presented Doderer as a candidate for the Nobel Prize. Henry Hatfield, author of a critical study of Thomas Mann, has written about "Vitality and Tradition: Doderer's 'Die Strudlhofstiege'" (*Monatshefte*, January 1955). H. M. Waidson, in *The Modern German Novel* (Oxford 1959), says about Doderer: "*Die Strudlhofstiege* and *Die Dämonen* are impressive for various reasons, but primarily as a picture of a world which is enormous in its range, extending to many varied aspects of society, and yet built up step by step with elaborate, detailed care as to style, plot, characterization and background. . . . It is one of the most outstanding and distinguished modern German novels of this century to date." The British poet and critic, Michael Hamburger, comments in his article "A Great Austrian Novelist" (*Encounter*, May 1957): "If so many good German novelists strike the foreign reader as provincial, it is not because they lived in the provinces or wrote about them; nor even because the German-speaking countries had no capital worthy of the name. There was always Vienna; but not a single great novel dedicated to her *genius loci* throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. What was lacking was a writer with the capacity to transform his particular province, or capital, into the center of the world. Heimito von Doderer's novels celebrate Vienna as she was never celebrated in the days of her imperial glory; yet not so much by showing her to have been the geographical, cultural, and political center of Europe at a particular time, the 1920's, as by making her the setting of a 'world theatre,' a stage on which universal passions and obsessions are acted out."

The Demons will be published this year in English translation by Knopf, the well-known publisher of the works of Thomas Mann in this country. Until that time the present short story from Doderer's collection, *The Torturing of the Leather Pouches* (*Die Peinigung der Lederbeutelchen*, 1959) is the first and so far only example of this important Austrian author's prose available in English. It reveals several aspects of Doderer's talent—the impressionistic sensitivity of his descriptions, the vitality of characterization, and his fine sense of humor that ranges from irony to subtle wit with metaphysical overtones.

Miss MacIntosh, My Darling

Chapter One of the Novel

MARGUERITE YOUNG

THE BUS-DRIVER was whistling, perhaps in anticipation of his wife, who would be a woman with ample breasts, those of a realized maturity. It would be impossible that he did not have, from my point of view, a wife and children, indeed, a happiness such as I could not imagine to be real, even like some legend out of the golden ages. He had spoken numerous times during our journey of his old woman waiting, and he was going home.

As if he were a Jehovah's Witness or a member of some other peculiar religious sect, his bushy hair grew almost to his shoulders. A Witness would not perhaps drive a Grey Goose bus, even in this far country, this interior America, but his head was large, bulging, an old, archaic dome of curled sculpture, and his eyes shone with gleamings of intensified, personal vision. He drove, in fact, erratically, perhaps because of the heavy mist which all but blotted out the asphalt road, the limitation, and more than once, with the bus's sudden lurching, I had feared that we might veer off into a ditch, that himself and his three passengers would be killed, our dismembered heads rolling in a corn field of withered corn stalks. He had whistled with each new escape, had turned and smiled back over his shoulder with a kind of serene triumph, even when the bus had brushed against the sides of a lumbering moving van with furniture piled up almost to the low sky, an upright piano, a rocking chair, a clothes' horse, a woman's feathered hat bobbing at the top in the grey mist like some accompanying bird.

Was he, after all, a bachelor, perhaps even some mad Don Quixote chasing windmills, a virgin spirit, nobody—and his family life, an emanation of my over-active imagination, really, my desire for established human relationships? All along the way, he had been drinking from a whiskey bottle, quite openly, yet with many calls

upon God, the angels, the archangels, angel Gabriel. All along the way, he had been singing, whistling, talking to himself, guessing what the old woman would say when she saw him, that she would certainly take his head off.

There were a sleeping couple, a pair of lovers, boy and girl, the only other passengers. They had gotten on at a dust-colored pottery town in the burning sunlight and, shading their eyes, had tried to sleep through languorous, creaking miles of a too familiar landscape.

The girl, thin and faded, perhaps prematurely old, was pregnant—yet resisted, as if it were a deformity, her situation of growth, there being nothing languorous in her appearance, nothing which should give itself up to nature. Her tiny face was covered with an artificial complexion like a mask too heavy, streaked with grey, and her colorless eyes had the cold and transparent look of being not satisfied, of being not filled with the light which comes from love. She was obviously dressed in what must have been her most wonderful finery, though her ensemble was an accidental confusion, a chaos to the eyes of the bewildered beholder, she being too tightly laced and that protuberance under her heart standing out as if it were a disease she wished to cover over with all these discursive details which should not focus attention, yet drew attention to her. There were rings on her fingers, many brass and wooden bracelets on her arms, a gold chain with a heart on her gauze-shrouded ankle, straw flowers piled upon the snub toes of her velvet slippers spiked with glass heels which should not carry her far, velvet butterflies like pansies hovering upon the moth-eaten fox fur collar of her green cloth coat which would not close and was too tight and did not cover her, coming only to her hips, and was of an old-fashioned style with pointed sleeves and pointed cuffs and scalloped edges and many velvet-covered buttons or marks where the buttons had been, small, tinkling bells moving when, in her sleep, she moved from side to side, yet not yielding to the powers of sleep which she resisted as if they were the powers of oblivion and of death, and cascades of oblong ten cent store pearls were dripping from her coral-colored ears, and her eyelids were painted with blue shadows, her eyebrows plucked to an invisible line, giving to her the look of a plucked and naked bird, and her lips were enlarged to an angular squareness by

the purple lipstick she might have put on in a rigorous dream. She wore, among all her heavy rings, no wedding ring, and her hands were pale yellow taloned by long red nails, her fingers continually scratching the worn surface of an old-fashioned patent leather vanity case she carried in her lap. Her dress of sleezy silk was bright burned orange painted with black sail-boats sailing over purple trees and red football players playing over steeples and white skiers skiing over sail-boats cascading to the hem and locked acrobats, the entire field of outdoor sports, it seemed, being on her body, for her scarf was painted with spidery tennis players and tennis nets and ice-skaters on silver ponds and red polo riders riding red horses, and there were little footballs hanging from her charm bracelets, tennis rackets and ice-skates and golf clubs and numerous other trophies, some of field and stream, satin fishes running around the hem of her chiffon petticoat edged with yellow lace, butterflies embroidered upon the knees of her thin silk stockings, and her skirts came up high above her knees, higher when she moved, showing her yellow satin garters and pairs of stuffed red valentine hearts dangling from ribbons and faces which were painted powder puffs, and the coat seemed shrunken or a size too small like something she might have worn in a remote youth. Her head was big on a narrow stem, her bleached yellow hair spirally built upward to a skein crowned with a spangled net and a hat which was a woven nest of dark and dusty funeral blossoms and ivory twigs with a pink enamelled branch on which was perched, precariously at that high altitude in the cold air-current, one stuffed yellow canary with a moth-eaten wing, a glassy eye.

Her stiff hand jogged in the aisle, a transparency through which one saw the knotted veins. She slept, narrow and turreted head stiff, upright, her eyes suddenly opening, seeming like insect eyes of many-faceted but cruel vision, her avid mouth in that small face opening to complain, with sudden rushes of metallic speech or with wild and hollow whispers, against her neighbors, against her mother, her father, the other girl, the way she had been caught, the growth of another life inside of her, this dark valley from which she might never return.

The boy seemed, by contrast, all blissful stolidity and broad-

faced innocence, his chestnut-colored hair tousled like a pony's on his low forehead, his skin burned to a dark, brick-colored red as by some immensely blowing heat not of the sunlight. He wore a faded football sweater, the letter C across its front, red-stained, rain-washed dungarees, moccasins embroidered with white beads. Sleeping the miles away, his cheek against the cold bus-window, his long-lashed eyelids closed, never opened, his lips placidly smiling.

Now as the bus-driver whistled, imitating the calls of birds to their mates, the bluebird's trill, the woodpecker's pecking, the murmur of quail, a baby's cry he had heard in the winter grass, the bright redness of the sky's reflection on the glazed bus-window was disappearing, and with that redness, the distinct, dismal lurching of old Coca Cola and aspirin signboards, tattered as tramps, which had accompanied our journey to the depths of southern Indiana, a state as yet unknown to me. The sky was drained and bloodless above the darkness of ethereal fields as if it had suffered, in one slow moment, the ultimate transfusion, as if the veins were shrivelled to nothingness. There was hardly a drop of red where lately the red had swarmed and buzzed like thousands of wild honey bees. It was spring, but it might have been winter still, another planet, the face of the dead moon. The earth was bare and cold and the thorn trees without flower. The bus-windows had turned to a cold, steaming greyness as if only the ghost of the world were crying outside, as if the known world of familiar associations had disappeared, and that which remained must seem but the conspiracy of memories and dreams floating without purpose, without limitation.

We had passed, on this journey, many curious pieces of rural architecture, an enormous coffee urn with its lid opened against the sky, a wigwam nightclub where, under a denuded oak, a melancholy buffalo was tethered, incongruous as the faded washing on the line. We had passed a windmill, a leaning tower, Noah's Ark, the old woman who lived in the shoe, but these were miles back, and there were now no buildings but those of the amorphous distance, little, low-roofed houses, small as ruined birds' nests, a child's face at some near window, the individuality blotted out by the watery greyness of the Middle West, the train as small as a toy train crossing a toy bridge.

There was an endless greyness engulfing the bus which moaned, the road before us no longer seeming to bisect space, the low, shaven fields, both low and whitish, the cattle humps of vague, distant, treeless, mole-colored hills. The scene was increasingly enlarged like that which might have been the first creation when only the spirit of God had moved upon the deep. It was the face of the ambiguous waters, of no boundary line, no shore. The scene, in fact, to one who was accustomed to a great body of water, was oceanic, dotted by pale pools in the vapors of mist, and I should not have been surprised to see, drifting over these empty, unmarked meadows of the first creation, something of the last, a cloud of pearl-breasted seagulls, all crying with angelic voices, or moored at some far, receding horizon, a lost ship which would never reach port. We had passed, far back on the road, the last harbor, a lighthouse, a shipwreck. Frozen lights appeared now like flares of crystal warning in the mist-shrouded, dark plain as if all the houses from which they emitted were travelling with us into an unknown distance from which no man returns alive. Far away, like smoke, there were plumed trees drifting, bent by the actions of no winds, and no stars were visible. In the beam of our anarchic headlights which barely cut through mist and darkness, there stood, by the side of the road, a tall man with a child perched on his lean shoulders, a double-headed man, staring at nothingness or beyond it. We were the intruders upon this plain of silence, and he shook his fist, listlessly, perhaps figuring the danger of walking on this road which now, suddenly turning, seemed to go back the way it had gone before. There was now no landscape.

There was now no landscape but the soul's, and that is the inexactitude, the ever shifting and the distant. I would never know the man's name, the organization of this fleeting image, what were his hopes, what were his disappointments. Yet he would remain forever engraved on memory's whirling disc, that double-headed shape in curdled mist, as tantalizing as my ignorance of life. All my life I had been reaching for the tangible, and it had evaded me, much like the myth of Tantalus, much as if the tangible itself were an illusion. My life had been made up of just these disrelated, delusive images hovering only for a moment at the margin of consciousness, then passing like ships in the night, even ships manned by dead helms-

men, by ghostly crews, by one's own soul at large.

What was the organization of illusion, of memory? Who knew even his own divided heart? Who knew all hearts as his own? Among beings strange to each other, those divided by the long roarings of time, of space, those who have never met or, when they meet, have not recognized as their own the other heart and that heart's weaknesses, have turned stonily away, would there not be, in the vision of some omniscient eye, a web of spidery logic establishing the most secret relationships, deep calling to deep, illuminations of the eternal darkness, recognitions in the night world of voyager dreams, all barriers dissolving, all souls as one and united? Every heart is the other heart. Every soul is the other soul. Every face is the other face. The individual is the one illusion.

I had walked alone, searching, seeing only, though I sought for an ultimate harmony, the fleeting image, the disrelation, the chaos begetting the chaos, the truth as but another illusion, that which must perish, the rose which must fade, the heart which must stop. Nothing I had touched but that it had faded like a dream, there being no dream that would not fail, no life which would not cease, no soul which answered mine like deep calling to deep. I had walked alone, the seeker through mazes of sorrow, and none had answered me. That background of illusion from which I always fled like a drowning man who clutches at a straw, it was always that background of illusion confronting me again, even as the foreground, and there seemed no truth but what the erroneous mind provided, another dream which had nor purpose nor bearing. There were always the dead seagulls in the whirlwind, the brown leaves falling, an empty, resonant house of broken mirrors reflecting the light of the sea, my mother dead among her dreams, many others dead with her who had dreamed her life away and who still might be dreaming, for death might still be her life, and she had been already so much a part of the ethereal and of the abstract, of the things intangible, of the things unknown. I had peered into all faces, seeing none, only those who were already gone, only those who could not answer. My illness had been great, dead souls like the autumn leaves stirring where I walked, and could I have believed in that ultimate harmony, I could have been among them, but there had been only, in my narrow

experience, the dream of chaos repeating chaos, so what I looked for always in the streets of those great harbor cities, was it not merely another illusion, that of the peace which should not be realized in heaven or on earth? Where should I go? Where should I turn? I had been too long half sleeping, cut off from communication with others, asking no more reasonable questions than a patient asks under the ether mask which seems like a train riding among the trackless stars or where there are no stars, no signposts any longer, and no one has ever seen the other person. All the other passengers, Negroes with white roosters crowing in their laps, beings unseen, merely sensed, each with his own dark and private heart, the darkness everlasting, their questions like my own, and no answer heard, for God is the loneliest of all, and there is perhaps no God but what we dreamed, and there is no train.

Long nights, searching for one who was dead, I, Vera Cartwheel, I, the imploring daughter of a mother under the sway of opium, a mother more beautiful than angels of light, I, Vera Cartwheel, had wandered through the streets of great, mysterious harbor cities, those which, at night, seemed all like each other, there where were the spectral faces appearing like foam, disappearing, faces as lost as mine, voices crying under water, seaweed locked in the hair of the drowned swimmer. I had slept in shelters for lost souls, those no one should miss, searching for one who was lost, forever outside, alone, the one person not dreaming and yet who had seemed, with the passage of years since her disappearance from my life, the central heart, the heart of all hearts, the face of all faces, the dead steersman, Miss MacIntosh, my darling, an old, red-headed nursemaid with her face uplifted toward the watery sky. I had walked through the desolate waterfront streets of those dark and intricate harbor cities, the neighborhoods of warehouses casting their shadows, shelters for old sailors, for lost souls, darkened light-houses, had turned down the unlighted alleys where the starved cats prowl among refuse, gleaming fish, the drunken mariner lurches, the prostitute screams, had looked into every muffled doorway, under every dimmed, leer-ing lamp, had searched for her among faceless old beggar women huddled in empty parks, the ragged men who sleep on fly-specked side-walks, their mouth foaming with homeless dreams, had search-

ed for her in old-fashioned saloons and bowling alleys and billiard parlors and under the falling leaves, had walked in whirling crowds that I might find her, had stopped at all corners where street preachers preached of the golden tides of the future world and harvests of dragons' teeth and reaping the whirlwind, had gone to baseball games in those packed stadiums, watching the pitchers pitch the moons, the suns, the stars, had visited a planetarium and an aquarium and a museum, had drifted with no purpose but this, had followed everywhere, searching for her, one so clear, thinking that, some day, just when I lost my way in the absolute darkness or crossed a traffic-roaring avenue of obliterating head-lights, screeching whistles, screaming stars, I should surely find her, Miss MacIntosh, my darling, only a step beyond, her whaler's hat dripping with water, her plaid, faded waterproof flapping in the wind, her bent black umbrella uplifted like some enormous, dark, scudding bird against the clouded sky, the always overcast.

Long years, drifting without purpose, I had searched for that hale companion of my lost childhood, no one but a fusty, busty old nursemaid, very simple-minded, very simple, the salt of common sense, her red hair gleaming to show that quick temper she always had, that impatience with which she would dismiss all shades and phantoms, even herself should she become one, for self-pity was not her meat, not her drink. Long years, my heart a dry, imploring emptiness, my eyes fixed on that one steady purpose, I had drifted from employment to employment, from hotel to hotel, searching relentlessly and everywhere for that old, plain darling who was lost, she who had cherished no illusions of noble grandeur, she who had rejected an aura, a crown of gold, she whose daily life had been unpresuming and hard, one not beloved then so much as now in memory, the dead steersman, her whaler's hat dripping with water, her boundless face concealed by fog and wind, her heart the weakness of all hearts, the strength. Where should I not find her again? Where should I ever find her? The years of her death had added to her stature, making her seem almost vague.

That she had only disappeared, I had always said, for hers had been the face of every face, the heart of every heart, and she had been the truest person ever I had seen, no one but a poor old nurse-

maid walking along the seashore, taking her constitutional, the salt crystals bearding her cheeks and her pointed chin, nothing amazing her, no phantom accompanying her in her morning or evening walks. She had no prince charming, and she was a spinster, married not even to the dream. We were always alone. We would sit under the storm lamp in the evening, an old nursemaid and a child playing at dominoes, two sentient beings alone in that great house of shades and monsters, my mother's citadel of dreams and visions and imaginary pretenders to vanished thrones, there where my mother dreamed, when the sea blew high, that fifty wild white horses had been struck dead by lightning in a ruined garden or that persons long drowned had walked out of the sea, their locks dripping. There was no one, however, and nothing had happened, Miss MacIntosh used to say, her knitting needles of ivory bone clicking like her false teeth, that no one must dream of what was not, of what would never be, that surely when I grew up, I must leave this realm of shades, this old New England house with its privileges of the past, those things which had been stolen from the dead, that I must strike out on my own, that I must lead a useful life and see America first, the broad interior, the spacious Middle West, that life which required no medium of the evil imagination to stand between oneself and the clear reality of simple things, for reality was very good and could be found by those who lived, could be seen even with the naked eye. Common sense is the finest sense, she had always said, that the soul should not dream of those things far distant and not to be realized, for the way was very plain, quite direct. It was a granite road and not the sea road taken by the ships falling beyond a far horizon. But when no longer under the dimmed storm lamp in the long evenings we played at dominoes or Chinese puzzles, Miss MacIntosh and I, two living beings alone in that great, enchanted house which knew no time, when I was left alone, screaming and wild, then I had dreamed of her, my red-cheeked darling, for there had been no one else so true, so good, and even in her unkindness, so kind.

Who now would recognize that background of illusion from which I had fled, so many years ago, seeking for her in all those places where she was not, where she might never be—that back-

ground from which I still was fleeing? After her disappearance or death, the sudden, terrible shock of that great loss which had divided my heart against my heart, there had been no one to turn to, no other sentient being of stable consciousness, and my mother, believing herself dead, that she had died long ago, had tried to kill me in order that I should be free of the influence of reality, had offered to me that poisonous compromise, my death pulsing rosily in the midst of my life, the world of dreams which would kill the dreamer and leave only the dream, the memories floating without purpose. Long ago, however, and by great effort, I had escaped my mother's darkened and secluded house that I might find the life which needed no dream of death, that life Miss MacIntosh had spoken of in no uncertain terms, and I had wandered from darkened harbor to darkened harbor and from employment to employment, always with one clear purpose in mind, the search for a lost companion who was, for all I knew, already dead, swept up upon the other shore. I had lived in ducal suites, in tenements like rabbit warrens—wearing my rags, had slept in fine hotels in the beds of dead emperors and false princes and banished dukes—wearing my regal jewels and ermine cape and long white gown, had slept in the beds of the poor, even where the subway roared, for I had been indifferent to my environment, and I had not always remembered where I was, and I had known no one. I had drifted from place to place, holding such little jobs as I could concentrate on and yet continue my dreams, beginning to study architecture, then giving it up because I could not plan a house if there was one soul which could not live in it, and finally, having tried all else, had been a poor fumbling typist in an insurance agency, typing mortality rates through a blur of tears, the frequency or numbers of death in ratio to population, age, sex, color, employment, position in life.

No longer searching for her, the dead steersman, no longer dreaming, I was following now, at last, her advice, for I had come to this far place. No longer, by some momentary quiver of the dreaming eyelid, should I find reality itself the banished, that surface phantoms had displaced it, that the world had fled, that this was only its ghost blowing at the bus-window.

What motive in this quest but the search for life, for love, for

truth that does not fail? I had come because of my own heart's need for an answer. I had come because of the searchings of other souls, the dead, the lost, because of a chance remark overheard on the city streets, because of the encompassing darkness, because of my mind which had been filled with nothing but the imaginary speakers, the endless dialogues of self with self, because I must find my way from the darkness to the ultimate light. I had come because of a dead girl's love letters scattered on the floor of her empty bedroom, the palm leaves crossed above the marble mantel piece, her rosary hanging on a brass bedpost, because of her suicide, because of a deaf musician, because of a drunkard's celestial dream of childhood, because of the answers not heard, because of a blind man's groping for his coffee cup at an all-night quick-lunch stand on the fog-shrouded waterfront of that great harbor city as he had asked of his companion—When shall the light, Peter, enter my soul? His eyes had been withered in their sockets—the bare light bulb glaring only three livid inches away from those burned-out hollows as he had groped for a thick white coffee cup, asking his plaintive, remorseless question—When shall the light, Peter, enter my soul again? Should he never again be as he had been in the old days, the world's greatest juggler, performing for the Lord's sake and glory, keeping six coffee cups mid-air simultaneously as he skipped a rope or rode on a bicycle, a sleight-of-hand artist who could pluck the playing cards off any man's sleeve, produce a rabbit out of any man's hat, make the invisible world visible as if an angel should be revealed?

Now as the bus groaned, each mile more laggard, the world stretching out to an unseen horizon, the world flat, I heard once more his question like my own—when shall the light enter my soul?—and when should the deprivation cease, and when should the body be restored, and when should the heart beat again? Travel-stained, my cheek against the cold bus-window, my head roaring with the memory of space, how should I ever know the land I passed through, the deep calling to the deep, the answer, for I was cut off, alone, seeing the fleeting image, the fragment beyond realization, the memory? I had come by many means of passage, by train and plane, by evening comet plane, that from where one could see the earth's abstract curvature in space, the dark mantle, the snowy dome lighted

by starlight, no human faces, by the morning star from where one saw the dreaming roof-tops, by day train which had jogged among steep hills of slag and burning eyes and coal-mining villages of bare-ribbed skeleton houses with their doors opened to the wind, the dust-colored rain, people blackened by coal dust, sweat, and sorrow, those who had gone down into the womb of mother earth, and now by this erratic bus which, plowing nowhere, suggested no landscape but the clouds, flight of angels drifting past the misted windows, no goal but something outside of time, some world more true than any that had been known, the beauty which would not be an aspect of the lie, the flesh and blood as organized, as complete, the hair, the lips, the eyes, the body organized, the human heart still beating.

And my search for this life was because of one already dead, she who had passed beyond, she who had been the moral guide, the unswerving, the true, her heart as stout as hickory or oak, her mind so sensible that she could not be deceived by any illusion or enchantment, she who was forever alone, outside, not taken in by all the sycophant luxuries of that opium paradise, a poor servant with patches on her best cotton gloves, a fishnet reticule and rimless eye-glasses and no make-up, not even a touch of lip rouge, her face its natural color, her old black canvas umbrella lifted against the rain or sunlight as she had used to walk along the seashore, preferring that marginal estate to my mother's house where, though the roarings of the surf like the roarings of lions should fill it, the sea itself was but another dream and far away as if it were intangible. The great, sea-blackened house with golden spires and cornices and towers peeled by the salt air, dark alleys, hidden interiors, the empty drawing rooms where the hostess had not set her foot for many years, as many drawing rooms as tideless years, the rooms too many for mortal use, chambers within chambers, the gilded, mirroring ball-rooms where no one danced, the hangings of scaly gold and rain-stained velvet, the heathen monsters everywhere, the painted, clouded ceilings illuminated by partial apparitions of the gods, the silken, padded walls, the ropes of rusted bells, the angels and the cherubim and the immortal rose, the dream of heaven, the lily-breasted virgins sporting in fields of asphodel, the water-gurgling gargoyles or those coated by dust, the interior and exterior fountains, the broken mar-

ble statues in ruined gardens sloping towards the sea, the disc throwers, the fat cupids, the thin psyches with flowing curls, the mute Apollo Belvedere, the king's horsemen, the life-sized chessmen seeming to move against the moving clouds that moved above the moving waters, the sealight lighting their wooden eyes, the seagulls perched like drifts of snow upon their heads.

What could Miss MacIntosh, a simple woman with a broken nose, find to admire in any broken marble statue, that which had been sculptured by man dreaming that he was other than he was or that he was man? Her religion was truth to nature, nothing else, as she would always say with a severity of good humor inviting no argument, no sad or meandering response. She disapproved quite heartily and firmly of all these unholy influences, these self-aggrandizements at the expense of common life which was the merest flesh and blood, her whole sensorium being repelled by the very dream of imagination which rejects reality, which flees from its bare face, for was she not sensible, the last person who would ever be taken in by what existed nowhere but in the dreaming mind, a plain, old-fashioned nursemaid, a red-headed and practical Middle Westerner, stoutly girded by her whale-boned corset, plainly clothed, visible to all, one who had kept her head above the waters in Chicago and elsewhere, one who had rejected an aura which should distinguish her from others, one who, with her way clearly set and her heart not foolish, would submit to no luxurious temptation of this old crazy house on a desolate stretch of the primitive New England coast, there where, though all the ghosts of the universe wandered, shrieking like winds, like tides, like daft sea birds, she had seen nothing but what was plain, the desolation which was enough for her?

The Ugly Sea

R. A. LAFFERTY

THE SEA IS UGLY, said Sour John, "and it's peculiar that I'm the only one who ever noticed it. There have been millions of words written on the sea, but nobody has written this. For a time I thought it was just my imagination, that it was only ugly to me. Then I analyzed it and found that it really is ugly.

"It is foul. It is dirtier than a cess-pool; yet men who would not willingly bathe in a cess-pool will bathe in it. It has the aroma of an open sewer; yet those who would not make a pilgrimage to a sewer will do so to the sea. It is untidy; it is possibly the most untidy thing in the world. And I doubt if there is any practical way to improve it. It cannot be drained; it cannot be covered up; it can only be ignored.

"Everything about it is ignoble. Its animals are baser than those of the land. Its plant life is rootless and protean. It contaminates and wastes the shores. It is an open grave where the living die down with dead."

"It *does* smell a little, Sour John, and it *is* untidy. But I don't think it's ugly. You cannot deny that sometimes it is really beautiful."

"I do deny it. It has no visual beauty. It is monotonous, with only four or five faces, and all of them coarse. The sun and the sky over it may be beautiful; the land that it borders may be fair; but the old sewer itself is ugly."

"Then why are you the only one who thinks so?"

"There could be several reasons. One, that I've long suspected, is that I'm smarter than other people. And another is that mankind has just decided to deny this ugliness for subconscious reasons, which is to say for no reason at all. The sea is a lot like the subconscious. It may even *be* the subconscious; that was the teaching of the Thalassalogians. The Peoples of the Plains dreamed of the Sea before they visited it. They were guilty dreams. They knew the sea was there, and they were ashamed of it. The Serpent in the Garden was a

Hydra, a water snake. He ascended the river to its source to prove that nothing was beyond his reach. That is the secret we have always to live with: that even the rivers of Paradise flow finally into that evil grave. We are in rhythm with that old ocean: it rises irregularly twice in twenty-four hours, and then repents of rising; and so largely do we."

"Sour John, I will still love the sea though you say it is ugly."

"So will I. I did not say I did not love it. I only said it was ugly. It is an open secret that God was less pleased with the sea than with anything else he made. His own people, at least, have always shunned it.

"O, they use it, and several times they have nearly owned it. But they do not go to sea as seamen. In all history there have been only three Jewish seamen. One was in Solomon's navy; he filled a required berth, and was unhappy. One served a Caliph in the tenth century; why I do not know. And the third was Moysha Uferwohner."

"Then let us hear about Moysha."

"Moysha was quite a good man. That is what makes it sad. And the oddest thing is what attracted him to the evil sea. You could not guess it in ten years."

"Not unless it was a water-front woman."

"That is fantastic. Of all unlikely things that would seem the most unlikely. And yet it's the truth and you hit it at once. Not a woman in being, however, but in potential (as the philosophers have it); which is to say, quite a young girl.

"Likely you have run across her. So I will tell it all."

This begins ten years ago. Moysha was then a little short of his majority, and was working with his father in an honorable trade not directly connected with the sea, that of the loan shark. But they often loaned money to seamen, a perilous business, for which reason the rates were a little higher than you might expect.

Moysha was making collections and picking up a little new trade. This took him to the smell of the sea, which was painful to him, as to any sensible man. And it took him to the Blue Fish, a water front cafe, bar, and lodging house.

A twelve year old girl, a cripple, the daughter of the proprietor was playing the piano. It was not for some time, due to the primacy of other matters, that Moysha realized that she was playing atrociously. Then he attempted to correct it. "Young lady, one should play well or not at all. Please play better, or stop. That is acutely painful."

She looked as though she were going to cry, and this disconcerted Moysha, though he did not know why it did. Half an hour later the fact intruded itself on his consciousness that she was still playing, and still playing badly; but now with a stilted sort of badness.

"Young lady, this is past all bearing. I suggest that you stop playing the damned thing and go to your bed. Or go anywhere and do anything. But this is hideous. Stop it!"

The little girl really did cry then. And as a result of it Moysha got into an altercation, got his head bloodied, and was put out of the place; the first time that such a thing ever happened to him. Then he realized that the seamen liked the little girl, and liked the way she played the piano.

This does not seem like a good beginning for either a tender love or a great passion. But it had to be the beginning; that was the first time they ever saw each other.

For the next three days Moysha was restless. A serpent was eating at his liver and he could not identify it. He began to take a drink in the middle of the day (it had not been his custom); and on the third day he asked for rum. There was a taste in his mouth and he was trying to match it. And in the inner windings of his head there was an awful smell, and it made him lonesome.

By the evening of the third day the terrible truth came to him: he had to go down for another whiff of that damned sea; and he possibly could not live through another night unless he heard that pretty little girl play the piano again.

Bonny *was* pretty. She had a wise way with her, and a wilful look. It was as though she had just decided not to do something very mean, and was a little sorry that she hadn't.

She didn't really play badly; just out of tune and as nobody else had ever played, with a great amount of ringing in the ballad tunes and a sudden muting, then a sort of clashing and chiming. But she

stopped playing when she saw that Moysha was in the room.

Moysha did not get on well at the Blue Fish. He didn't know how to break into the conversation of the seamen, and in his embarrassment he ordered drink after drink. When finally he became quarrelsome (as he had never been before) they put him out of the place again.

Moysha lay on a dirty tarp out on a T head and listened while Bonny played the piano again. Then she stopped. She had probably been sent to bed.

But instead she came out to the T head where he was.

"You old toad, you give me the creeps."

"I do, little girl?"

"Sure you do. And papa says 'Don't let that Yehude in the place again, he makes everybody nervous, if someone wants to borrow money from him let them borrow it somewhere else.' Even the dogs growl at you down here."

"I know it."

"Then why do you come here?"

"Tonight is the only time I ever did come except on business."

"Tonight is what I am talking about."

"I came down to see you."

"I know you did, dear. O, I didn't mean to call you that. I call everybody that."

"Do you want to take it back?"

"No, I don't want to take it back. You old toad, why aren't you a seaman like everybody else?"

"Is everybody else a seaman?"

"Everybody that comes to the Blue Fish. How will you come to the Fish now when Papa won't let you in the place?"

"I don't know."

"If you give me one of your cards I'll call you up."

"Here."

"And if you give me two dollars and a half I'll pay you back three dollars and a quarter Saturday."

"Here."

"I can't play the piano any other way. If you were a seaman I bet you'd like the way I play the piano. Good night you old toad."

"Good night, Bonny."

And it was then that the dismal thought first came to Moysha: "What if I should be a seaman after all?"

Now this was the most terrible thing he could have done. He could have become a Christian, he could have married a tramp, he could have been convicted of embezzlement. But to leave his old life for the sea would be more than he could stand and more than his family could stand.

And there was no reason for it: only that a twelve year old girl looked at him less kindly than if he had been a seaman. It is a terrible and empty thing to go to sea: all order is broken up and there are only periods of debauchery and boredom and work and grinding idleness, and the sickening old pond and its dirty borders. It was for such reasons that Moysha hesitated for three months.

Bonny came to see him for possibly the tenth time. She was now paying him interest of sixty cents a week on an old debt which, in the normal state of affairs, she would never be able to clear.

"Bonny, I wish there was something that I could say to you."

"You can say anything you want to me."

"O Bonny, you don't know what I mean."

"You want to bet I don't?"

"Bonny, what will you be doing in four years?"

"I'll be getting married to a seaman if I can find one to take me."

"Why shouldn't one take you?"

"For a seaman it is bad luck to marry a crippled woman."

So on the first day of summer Moysha went off to sea as a lowly wiper. It broke his heart and shamed his family. He woke and slept in misery for the foulness of the life. He ate goy food and sinned in the ports in attempting to be a salty dog. And it was nine weeks before he was back to his home port; and he went to the Blue Fish with some other seamen.

It was afternoon, and Bonny went for a walk with him across the peninsula and down to the beach.

"Well, I'm thunderstruck is all I can say. Why in the world would a sensible man want to go to sea?"

"I thought you liked seamen, Bonny."

"I do. But how is a man going to turn into a seaman if he isn't one to start with? A dog could turn into a fish easier. That's the dumbest thing anyone ever did. I had an idea when you came to the place today that you turned into a seaman just for me. Did you?"

"Yes."

"I could be coy and say 'Why Moysha, I'm only twelve years old', but I already knew how you felt. I will tell you something. I never did a mean thing, and I never saw anybody I wanted to be mean to till I met you. But I could be mean to you. It would be fun to ruin you. We aren't good for each other. You oughtn't to see me ever again."

"I have to."

"Then maybe I have to be mean to you. It's for both of us that I ask you not to see me again. I don't want to ruin you, and I don't want to be a mean woman; but I will be if you keep coming around."

"Well, I can't stay away."

"Very well, then I'll be perverse. I'll shock you every time I open my mouth. I'll tell you that I do filthy things, and you won't know whether I'm lying or not. You won't know what I mean, and you'll be afraid to find out. You'll never be able to stay away from me if you don't stay away now. I'll have husbands and still keep you on a string. You'll stand outside in the dark and look at the light in my window, and you'll eat your own heart. Please go away. I don't want to turn mean."

"But Bonny, it doesn't have to be that way."

"I hope it doesn't, but it scares me every time I see you. Now I'll make a bargain with you. If you try to stay away I'll try to stay good. But if you come back again I won't be responsible. You ought to go back uptown and not try to be a seamar. any more."

After that the little girl went back to the Blue Fish.

Moysha did not go back uptown. He returned to the sea, and he did not visit that port again for a year. And there was a change in him. From closer acquaintance he no longer noticed that the sea was foul. Once at sunset, for a moment, he found something pleasant about it. He no longer sinned excessively in the ports. Ashore he travelled beyond the waterfront bars and visited the countries behind and met the wonderful people. He got the feel of the rough old

globe in his head. In a pension in Holland he played chess with another twelve year old girl, who was not precocious, and who did not dread turning into a mean woman. In a pub in Denmark he learned to take snuff like the saltiest seaman of them all. At an inn in Brittany he was told that the sea is the heritage of the poor who cannot afford the land. It was in Brittany that he first noticed that he now walked like an old salt.

After a year he went back to his home port and to the Blue Fish.

"In a way I'm glad to see you," said Bonny. "I've been feeling contrary lately and you'll give me an excuse. Every morning I wake up and say 'This day I'm going to raise hell.' Then I can't find anyone to raise hell with. All those water rats I like so well that I can't be mean to them. But I bet I know how to be mean to you. Well go get a room and tell me where it is, and I'll come to you tonight."

"But you're only a little girl, and besides you don't mean it."

"Then you're going to find out if I mean it. I intend to come. If you think you love me because I'm pretty and good, then I'll make you love me for a devil. There's things you don't even know about, and you've been a seaman for a year. I'll make you torture me, and it'll be a lot worse torture to you. I'll show you what unnatural really means. You're going to be mighty sorry you came back."

"Bonny, your humor is cruel."

"When did I ever have any humor? And you don't know if I'm kidding, and you never will know. Would you rather I did these things with someone else than with you?"

"No."

"Well I will. If you don't tell me where your room is, I'll go to someone else's room tonight. I'll do things so filthy you wouldn't believe it. And even if I don't go to somebody, I'll tell you tomorrow that I did."

But Moysha would not tell her where his room was. So late that night when he left the Blue Fish she followed him. It was fantastic for a grown man to walk faster and faster to escape a thirteen year old crippled girl, and finally to run in panic through the dark streets. But when finally she lost him she cried out with surprising kindness: "Goodnight Moysha, I'm sorry I was mean."

But she wasn't very sorry, for the next night she was still mean.

"You see that old man with the hair in his ears? He's filthy and we don't even understand each other's language. But he understood what I wanted well enough. He's the one I spent last night with."

"Bonny, that's a lie, and it isn't funny."

"I know it isn't funny. But can you be sure that it's a lie? I only lie part of the time, and you never know when. Now tonight, if you don't tell me where your room is, I'm going to take either that old red-faced slobberer or that black man. And you can follow me, since you run away when I follow you, and see that I go with one of them. And you can stand out in the street and look up at our light. I always leave the light on."

"Bonny, why are you mean?"

"I wish I knew, Moysha, I wish I knew."

After a week of this he went to sea again, and did not come back to his home port for two years. He learned of the sea-leaning giants.

"I do not know the name of this tree," said Sour John, "though once I knew it. This is the time of a story where one usually says it's time for a drink. However, for a long time I have been worried about my parasites who are to me almost like my own children, and this constant diet of rum and red-eye cannot be good for them. I believe if the young lady would fry me a platter of eggs it would please my small associates, and do me more good than harm."

He learned, Moysha did, of the sea-leaning giants. They are massive trees of the islands and the more fragmentary mainlands, and they grow almost horizontal out toward the sea. They are not influenced by the wind; from the time they are little whips the wind is always blowing in from the sea, and they grow against it and against all reason. They have, some of them, trunks nine feet thick, but they always lean out over the sea. Moysha began to understand why they did, though most people would never understand it.

He acquired a talking bird of great versatility. He acquired also a ring tailed monkey and a snake that he carried around inside his shirt, for Moysha was now a very salty seaman.

He was prosperous, for he had never forsaken the trade of the money lender, and he was always a shrewd buyer of novelties and

merchandise. He turned them over as he went from port to port, and always at a profit.

He became a cool student of the ceaseless carnage of the ocean, and loved to muse on the ascending and descending corpses and their fragments in that old watery grave.

He spent seven months on a certain Chinese puzzle, and he worked it, the only occidental who ever had patience enough to do so.

When she was fifteen Bonny married a seaman, and he was not Moysha. This happened just one week before Moysha came back to port and to the Blue Fish. The man she married was named Oglesby Ogburn; and if you think that's a funny name, you should have heard the handles of some of them that she turned down.

The very day that Moysha came to the Blue Fish was the day that Oglesby left; for the honeymoon was over, and he had to go back to sea. Bonny was now all kindness to everyone. But she still put the old needle into Moysha.

"I've had a husband for a week now, so I won't be able to get along without a man. You stay with me while you're in town; and after that I'll get another, and then another and another. And by that time Oglesby will be back for a week."

"Don't talk like that, Bonny, even if I know you're joking."

"But you don't know that I'm joking. You never know for sure."

"How can anyone who looks so like an angel talk like that?"

"It does provide a contrast. Don't you think it makes me more interesting? I didn't know you were the kind who chased married women."

"I'm not. But O Bonny! What am I to do?"

"Well I've certainly offered you everything. I don't know how I can offer you any more."

And a few days later when Moysha was leaving port they talked again.

"You haven't even given me a wedding present or wished me luck. And we do need it. It's always bad luck for a seaman to marry a crippled woman. What are you going to give me for a wedding present?"

"The only thing I will give you is the serpent from my bosom."

"O don't talk so flowery."

Then he took the snake out of his shirt.

"O, I didn't know you had a real snake. Is he for me? That's the nicest present anyone ever gave me. What do you call him?"

"Why, just snake. Ular, that is, he's a foreign snake."

So he went back to sea and left the little girl there with the snake in her hands.

Bonny was a widow when she was sixteen, as everyone had known she would be. It's no joke about it being bad luck for a seaman to marry a cripple. They seldom lose much time in perishing after they do it. Oglesby died at sea, as all the Ogburns did; and it was from a trifling illness from which he was hardly sick at all. It was many weeks later that Moysha heard the news, and then he hurried back to the home port.

He was too late. Bonny had married again.

"I thought you'd probably come, and I kind of wanted it to be you. But you waited so long, and the summer was half over, that I decided to marry Polycarp Melish. I'm halfway sorry I did. He wouldn't let Ular sleep with us, and he killed him just because he bit him on the thumb.

"But I tell you what you do. What with the bad luck and all, Polycarp won't last many months. Come around earlier next year. I like to get married in the springtime. I'll be a double widow then."

"Bonny, that's a terrible way to talk even when kidding."

"I'm not kidding at all. I even have an idea how we can beat the jinx. I'll tell you about it after we get married next year. Maybe a crippled girl gets to keep her third husband."

"Do you want Polycarp to die?"

"Of course I don't. I love him. I love all my husbands, just like I'll love you after I marry you. I can't help it if I'm bad luck. I told him, and he said he already knew it; but he wanted to do it anyhow. Will you bring me another snake the next time you're in port?"

"Yes. And you can keep the monkey in place of it till I come back. But you can't have the bird yet. I have to keep some one to talk to."

"All right. Please come in the spring. Don't wait till summer again or it'll be too late and I'll already be married to someone else. But whether we get married or not, I'm never going to be mean

again. I'm getting too old for that."

So he went to sea again happier than he ever had before.

When she was seventeen Bonny was a widow again as everyone had known she would be. Polycarp had been mangled and chopped to pieces in an unusual accident in the engine room of his ship.

Moysha heard of it very soon, before it could have been heard of at home. And he took council with his talking bird, and with one other, technically more human.

"This other," said Sour John, "was myself. It was very early spring, and Moysha was wondering if it were really best to hurry home and marry Bonny.

"I am not at all superstitious," he said. "I do not believe that a crippled woman is necessarily bad luck to a seaman. But I believe that Bonny may be bad luck to everyone, including herself."

"We were on a chocolate island of a French flavor and a French name. On it were girls as pretty as Bonny, and without her reputation for bad luck: girls who would never be either wives nor widows. And there is a way to go clear around the world from one such place to another

"The Blue Fish is not necessarily the center of the earth," I told him. "I have always believed it to be a little left of center. And Bonny may not be the queen. But if you think that she is, then for you she is so. Nine months, or even a year is not very long to live, and you will be at sea most of the time. But if you think a few weeks with the little girl is enough, then it is enough for you. A lot of others who will not have even that will be dead by next Easter." I said this to cheer him up. I was always the cheerful type.

"And what do you think?" Moysha asked the talking bird.

"Sampah," said the bird in his own tongue. This means rubbish. But whether he meant that the superstition was rubbish, or the idea of marrying with consequent early death was rubbish, is something that is still locked up in his little green head.

Moysha hurried home to marry Bonny. He brought a brother of Ular for a present, and he went at once to the Blue Fish.

"Well you're just in time. I was going to have the bans read for me and somebody tomorrow, and if you'd been an hour later it wouldn't have been you."

"I was halfway afraid to come."

"You needn't have been afraid. I told you I knew a way to beat the jinx. I'm selling the Blue Fish. I wrote you that Papa was dead. And we're going to take a house up town and forget the sea."

"Forget the sea? How could anyone forget the sea?"

"Why, you're only a toy seaman. You weren't raised to it. When you go away from it you won't be a seaman at all. And crippled women are only bad luck to seamen, not to other men."

"But what would I do? The sea is all I know."

"Don't be a child, Moysha. You hate the sea, remember? You always told me that you did. You only went to sea because you thought I liked seamen. You know a hundred ways to make a dollar, and you don't have to go near the sea for any of them."

So they were married. And they were happy. Moysha discovered that Bonny was really an angel. Her devil talk had been a stunt.

It was worth all five dark years at sea to have her. She was now even more lovely than the first night he had seen her. They lived in a house uptown in the heart of the city, and were an urbane and civilized couple. And three years went by.

Then one day Bonny said that they ought to get rid of the snake, and maybe even the monkey. She was afraid they would bite one of the children, or one of the children would bite them.

The talking bird said that if his friends left he would leave too.

"But Bonny," said Moysha, "these three are all that I have to remind me of the years when I was a seaman."

"You have me also. But why do you want to be reminded of those awful days?"

"I know what we could do, Bonny. We could buy the Blue Fish again. It isn't doing well. We could live there and run it. And we could have a place there for the snake and the monkey and the bird."

"Yes, we could have a place for them all, but not for the children. That is no place to raise children. I know, and I was raised there. Now my love, don't be difficult. Take the three creatures and dispose of them. And remember that for us the sea isn't even there any more."

But it was still there when he went down to the Blue Fish to try to sell the three creatures to the seaman. An old friend of his was present and was looking for an engineer first class to ship out that

very night. And there was a great difficulty in selling the creatures.

He could not sell them unless he put a price on them, and he was damned if he'd do that. That was worse than putting a price on his own children. He had had them longer than his children, and they were more peculiarly his own. He could not sell them. And he could not go home and tell his wife that he could not sell them.

"He went out and sat on the horns of the dilemma and looked at the sea. And then his old friend (who coincidentally was myself)," said Sour John, "came out and said that he sure did need an engineer first class to leave that very night.

"And then what do you think that Moysha did?"

"O, he signed on and went back to sea."

Sour John was thunderstruck.

"How did you know that? You've hit it again. I never will know how you do it. Well, that's what he did. In the face of everything he left his beautiful wife and children, and his clean life, and went to the filthy sea again. It's incredible."

"And how is he doing now?"

"God knows. I mean it literally. Naturally he's dead. That's been a year. You don't expect a seaman married to a crippled woman to live forever do you?"

"And how is Bonny?"

"I went to see her this afternoon; for this is the port where it all happened. She had out an atlas and a pencil and a piece of string. She was trying to measure out what town in the whole country is further from the sea.

"She is lonely and grieves for Moysha, more than for either of her other husbands. But O she is lovely! She supports herself and her brood by giving piano lessons."

"Is there a moral to this?"

"No. It is an immoral story. And it's a mystery to me. A man will not normally leave a clean home to dwell in an open grave, nor abandon children to descend into a sewer, nor forswear a lovely and loving wife to go faring on a cess-pool, knowing that he will shortly die there as a part of the bargain.

"But that is what he did."

Digging for the Statue—A Parable

KOSTES PALAMAS

Translated from the Greek by Helen E. Farmakis

I CLIMBED to the top of the hill guided by the words of the world traveler of old. Out of the book I held—while I bent over the passage reading and rereading—poured a voice, as if it came from inside a deep well, revealing lost treasures.

On the spot I stood, once rose the temple to the Great Mother. Here stood the statue, the great and miraculous statue of the Universal Mother, the goddess of the godly, mounted upon an awesome fierce lion. But no tempest, no lion's fierceness was ever so awesome as the calmness of absolute serenity that she radiated.

Over her brow towered her crown; the sky and the earth and the sea harmoniously blended in her stole. And the populace, storm-tossed, night and day scoured for gifts both the entire mainland and the depths of the sea, and brought to the feet of the goddess altar gifts of the most precious of precious stones.

Here stood the temple, a cyclopean structure, a creation of wonder. And the world traveler of old drew me to dig, arduously and unswerving by day and by night, till my pick axe should strike on that tremendous unresisting essence of all, the world renowned unseen statue.

I started to dig and dig and dig. And I tried to envision what it will be like to watch the Great Mother reborn out of the efforts of my own hands. A shiver ran through me. I felt it will be like watching the first morning star rise over the horizon after that first of all sunsets at the beginning of time.

And the summer sun rose high. And came the blazing heat of the noon hour. And far and wide dry heat blazed forth from the drought-hit land and every last vestige of dewy freshness was gone.

Through every month the earth had been yearning for the freshness of sweet water. And, where the one spring by the wayside

gave water, water came slow as teardrops. Here people came from far and wide, and ever more pressed in daily, and daily fought tooth and nail for the yield of one drop of precious moisture.

And I, as if untouched from need of water, sought only the supreme thirst-quenching and went on with my digging. I stayed on at my digging to no avail. I went on digging among the ruins and at my lonely task I kept my thoughts immersed in the guiding words of the ancient world traveler. Still to no avail.

There passed another day, and came another night, and followed another dawn. And the third day, sharply upon the hour of twilight, my pick axe suddenly struck not on resisting rock, but on a thrust of deep-sprung water. My thrust burst forth a spring, a rich flowing spring of water that rushed forth unresisting, overflowing, as if it would flood all the land.

And now I see reflected on the surface of the spreading waters a whole populace thirst-freed, in a world of plentious verdure, a world of liberated dawns and clear horizons.

To you, unearthed, unfound statue, I have this to say:

"Follow your deep mystic ways in the dark unknown. I am only a mortal. I am not the superhuman being meant to bring upon the earth the supreme unthirsting.

"Enough for me is this blessed sight that lies before me of so many lips, so many hands, so many brows refreshed and restored by the waters of this spring—arrested in their kneeling postures, as if they stayed to kneel before me in homage."

The Butterfly and the Traffic Light

. . . the moth for the star.

—Shelley

CYNTHIA OZICK

JERUSALEM, that phoenix city, is not known by its street-names. Neither is Baghdad, Copenhagen, Rio de Janeiro, Camelot, or Athens; nor Peking, Florence, Babylon, St. Petersburg. These fabled capitals rise up ready-spired, story-domed and filigreed; they come to us at the end of a plain, behind hill or cloud, walled and moated by myths and antique rumors. They are built of copper, silver, and gold; they are founded on milkwhite stone; the bright thrones of ideal kings jewel them. Balconies, parks, little gates, columns and statuary, carriage-houses and stables, attics, kitchens, gables, tiles, yards, rubied steeples, brilliant roofs, peacocks, lapdogs, grand ladies, beggars, towers, bowers, harbors, barbers, wigs, judges, courts, and wines of all sorts fill them. Yet, though we see the shimmer of the smallest pebble beneath the humblest foot in all the great seats of legend, still not a single street is celebrated. The thoroughfares of beautiful cities are somehow obscure, unless, of course, we count Venice: but a canal is not really the same as a street. The ways, avenues, plazas, and squares of old cities are lost to us, we do not like to think of them, they move like wicked scratches upon the smooth enamel of our golden towns; we have forgotten most of them. There is no beauty in cross-section—we take our cities, like our wishes, whole.

It is different with places of small repute or where time has not yet deigned to be an inhabitant. It is different especially in America. They tell us that Boston is our Jerusalem; but, as anyone who has ever lived there knows, Boston owns only half a history. Honor, pomp, hallowed scenes, proud families, the Athenaeum and the Symphony are Boston's; but Boston has no tragic tradition. Boston has never wept. No Bostonian has ever sung, mourning for his city,

"If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth"—for, to manage his accent, the Bostonian's tongue is already in that position. We hear of Beacon Hill and Back Bay, of Faneuil market and State Street: it is all cross-section, all map. And the State House with its gilt dome (it counts for nothing that Paul Revere supplied the bottommost layer of gold leaf: he was businessman, not horseman, then) throws back furious sunsets garishly, boastfully, as no power-rich Carthage, for shame, would dare. There is no fairy mist in Boston. True, its street-names are notable: Boylston, Washington, Commonwealth, Marlborough, Tremont, Beacon; and then the Squares, Kenmore, Copley, Louisburg, and Scollay—evidence enough that the whole, unlike Jerusalem, has not transcended its material parts. Boston has a history of neighborhoods. Jerusalem has a history of histories.

The other American towns are even less fortunate. It is not merely that they lack rudimentary legends, that their names are homely and unimaginative, half ending in -burg and half in -ville, or that nothing has ever happened in them. Unlike the ancient capitals, they are not infixed in our vision, we are not born knowing them, as though, in some earlier migration, we had been dwellers there: for no one is a stranger to Jerusalem. And unlike even Boston, most cities in America have no landmarks, no age-enshrined graveyards (although death is famous everywhere), no green park to show a massacre, poet's murder, or high marriage. The American town, alas, has no identity hinting at immortality; we recognize it only by its ubiquitous street-names: sometimes Main Street, sometimes High Street, and frequently Central Avenue. Grandeur shuns such streets. It is all ambition and aspiration there, and nothing to look back at. Cicero said that men who know nothing of what has gone before them are like children. But Main, High, and Central have no past; rather, their past is now. It is not the fault of the inhabitants that nothing has gone before them. Nor are they to be condemned if they make their spinal streets conspicuous, and confer egregious lustre and false acclaim on Central, High, or Main, and erect minarets and marquees indeed as though their city were already in dream and fable. But it is where one street in particular is regarded as the central life, the high spot, the main drag, that we know the

city to be a prenatal trace only. The kiln of history bakes out these prides and these divisions. When the streets have been forgotten a thousand years, the divine city is born.

In the farm-village where the brewer Buldenquist had chosen to establish his Mighty College, the primitive commercial artery was called, not surprisingly, "downtown," and then, more respectably, Main Street, and then, rather covetously looking to civic improvement, Buldenquist Road. But the Sacred Bull had dedicated himself to the foundation and perpetuation of scientific farming, and had a prejudice against putting money into pavements and other citifications. So the town fathers (for by that time the place *was* a town, swollen by the boarding houses and saloons frequented by crowds of young farm students)—the town fathers stretched their heads for historical allusions embedded in local folklore, but found nothing except two or three old family scandals, until one day a traveling salesman named Rogers sold the mayor an "archive"—a wrinkled, torn, doused, singed, and otherwise quite ancient-looking holographic volume purporting to hold the records and diaries of one Colonel Elihu Bigghe. This rather obscure officer had by gratifying coincidence passed through the neighborhood during the war with a force of two hundred, the document claimed, encountering a skirmish with the enemy on the very spot of the present firehouse—the "war" being, according to some, the Civil War, and in the positive authority of others, one of the lesser Indian Wars—in his private diary Bigghe was not, after all, expected to drop hints. At any rate, the skirmish was there in detail—one hundred or more of the enemy dead; not one of ours; ninety-seven of theirs wounded; our survivors all hale but three; the bravery of our side; the cowardice and brutality of the foe; and further pious and patriotic remarks on Country, Creator, and Christian Charity. A decade or so after this remarkable discovery the mayor heard of Rogers' arrest, somewhere in the East, for forgery, and in his secret heart began to wonder whether he might not have been taken in: but by then the Bigghe diaries were under glass in the antiseptic-smelling lobby of the town hall, school children were being herded regularly by their teachers to view it, boring Fourth of July speeches had been droned before the firehouse

in annual commemoration, and most people had forgotten that Bigghe Road had ever been called after the grudging brewer. And who could blame the inhabitants if, after half a hundred years, they began to spell it Big Road? For by then the town had grown into a city, wide and clamorous.

For Fishbein it was an imitation of a city. He claimed (not altogether correctly) that he had seen all the capitals of Europe, and yet had never come upon anything to match Big Road in name or character. He liked to tell how the streets of Europe were "employed," as he put it: he would people them with beggars and derelicts—"they keep their cash and their beds in the streets"; and with crowds assembled for riot or amusement or politics—"in Moscow they filled, the revolutionaries I mean, three troikas with White Russians and shot them, the White Russians I mean, and let them run wild in the street, the horses I mean, to spill all the corpses" (but he had never been to Moscow); and with travelers determined on objective and destination—"they use the streets there to go from one place to another, the original design of streets, *n'est-ce pas?*" Fishbein considered that, while a city exists for its own sake, a street is utilitarian. The uses of Big Road, on the contrary, were plainly secondary. In Fishbein's view Big Road had come into being only that the city might have a conscious center—much as the nucleus of a cell demonstrates the cell's character and maintains its well-being ("although," Fishbein argued, "in the cell it is a moot question whether the nucleus exists for the sake of the cell or the cell for the sake of the nucleus: whereas it is clear that a formless city such as this requires a centrality from which to learn the idea of form"). But if the city were to have modeled itself after Big Road, it would have grown long, like a serpent, and unreliable in its sudden coilings. This had not happened. Big Road crept, toiled, and ran, but the city nibbled at this farmhouse and that, and spread and spread with no pattern other than exuberance and greed. And if Fishbein had to go to biology or botany or history for his analogies, the city was proud that it had Big Road to stimulate such comparisons.

Big Road was different by day and by night, weekday and weekend. Daylight, sunlight, and even rainlight gave everything its

shadow, winter and summer, so that every person and every object had its *Doppelgänger*, persistent and hopeless. There was a kind of doubleness that clung to the street, as though one remembered having seen this and this and this before. The stores, hung with signs, had it, the lazy-walking old women had it (all of them uniformly rouged in the geometric centers of their cheeks like victims of some senile fever already dangerously epidemic), the traffic lights suspended from their wires had it, the air dense with the local accent had it.

This insistent sense of recognition was the subject of one of Fishbein's favorite lectures to his walking companion. "It's America repeating itself! Imitating its own worst habits! Haven't I seen the same thing everywhere? It's a simultaneous urbanization all over, you can almost hear the coxswain crow 'Now all together, boys!'—This lamp-post, I saw it years ago in Birmingham, that same scalloped bowl teetering on a wrought-iron stick. At least in Europe the lamp-posts look different in each place, they have individual characters. And this traffic light! There's no cross-street there, so what do they want it for in such a desert? I'll tell you: they put it up to pretend they're a real city—to tease the transients who might be naive enough to stop for it. And that click and buzz, that flash and blink, why do they all do that in just the same way? Repeat and repeat, nothing meaningful by itself . . ."

"I don't mind them, they're like abstract statues," Isabel once replied to this. "As though we were strangers from another part of the world and thought them some kind of religious icon with a red and a green eye. The ones on poles especially."

He recognized his own fancifulness, coarsened, labored, and made literal. He had taught her to think like this. But she had a distressing disinclination to shake off logic; she did not know how to ride her intuition.

"No, no," he objected, "then you don't know what an icon is! A traffic light could never be anything but a traffic light. —What kind of a religion would it be which had only one version of its deity—a whole row of identical icons in every city?"

She considered rapidly. "An advanced religion. I mean a monotheistic one."

"And what makes you certain that monotheism is 'advanced'? On the contrary, little dear! It's as foolish to be fixed on one God as it is to be fixed on one idea, isn't that plain? The index of advancement is flexibility. Human temperaments are so variable, how could one God satisfy them all? The Greeks and Romans had a god for every personality, the way the Church has a saint for every mood. Savages, Hindus, and Roman Catholics understand all that. It's only the Jews and their imitators who insist on a rigid unitarian God—I can't think of anything more unfortunate for history: it's the narrow way, like God imposing his will on Job. The disgrace of the fable is that Job didn't turn to another god, one more germane to his illusions. It's what any sensible man would have done. And then wouldn't the boils have gone away of their own accord?—the Bible states clearly that they were simply a psychogenic nervous disorder—isn't that what's meant by 'Satan'? There's no disaster that doesn't come of missing an imagination: I've told you that before, little dear. Now the Maccabean War for instance, for an altogether unintelligible occasion! All Antiochus the Fourth intended—he was Emperor of Syria at the time—was to set up a statue of Zeus on the altar of the Temple of Jerusalem, a harmless affair—who would be hurt by it? It wasn't that Antiochus cared anything for Zeus himself—he was nothing if not an agnostic: a philosopher, anyway—the whole movement was only to symbolize the Syrian hegemony. It wasn't worth a war to get rid of the thing! A little breadth of vision, you see, a little imagination, a little *flexibility*, I mean—there ought to be room for Zeus *and* God under one roof . . . That's why traffic lights won't do for icons! They haven't been conceived in a pluralistic spirit, they're all exactly alike. Icons ought to differ from one another, don't you see? An icon's only a mask, that's the point, a representational mask which stands for an idea."

"In that case," Isabel tried it, "if a traffic light were an icon it would stand for two ideas, stop and go—"

"Stop and go, virtue and vice, logic and law! —Why are you always on the verge of moralizing, little dear, when it's a fever, not morals, that keeps the world spinning! Are masks only for showing the truth? But no, they're for hiding, they're for misleading, too . . . It's a maxim, you see: one mask reveals, another conceals."

"Which kind is better?"

"Whichever you happen to be wearing at the moment," he told her.

Often he spoke to her in this manner among night crowds on Big Road. Sometimes, too argumentative to be touched, she kept her hands in her pockets and, unexpectedly choosing a corner to turn, he would wind a rope of hair around his finger and draw her leashed after him. She always went easily; she scarcely needed to be led. Among all those night walkers the two of them seemed obscure, dimmed-out, and under a heat-screened autumn moon, one of those shimmering country-moons indigenous to midwestern America, he came to a kind of truce with the street. It was no reconciliation, nothing so friendly as that, not even a cessation of warfare, only of present aggression. To come to terms with Big Road would have been to come to terms with America. And since this was impossible, he dallied instead with masks, and icons, and Isabel's long brown hair.

After twilight on the advent of the weekend the clutter of banners, the parades, the caravans of curiously outfitted convertibles vanished, and the students came out to roam. They sought each other with antics and capers, brilliantly tantalizing in the beginning darkness. Voices hung in the air, shot upward all along the street, and celebrated the Friday madness. It was a grand posture of relief: the stores already closed but the display-windows still lit, and the mannequins leaning forward from their glass cages with leers of painted horror and malignant eyeballs; and then the pirate-movie letting out, and the clusters of students flowing in gleaming rows, like pearls on a string, past posters raging with crimson seas and tall-masted ships and black-haired beauties shrieking, out of the scented palace into drug stores and ice-cream parlors. Sweet, sweet, it was all sweet there before the shops and among the crawling automobiles and under the repetitious street-lamps and below the singular moon. On the sidewalks the girls sprouted like tapestry blossoms, their heads rising from slender necks like woven petals swaying on the stems. They wore thin dresses, and short capelike coats over them; they wore no stockings, and their round bare legs moved boldly

through an eddy of rainbow skirts; the swift white bone of ankle cut into the breath of the wind. A kind of greed drove Fishbein among them. "See that one," he would say, consumed with yearning, turning back in the wake of the young lasses to observe their gait, and how the filaments of their dresses seemed to float below their arms caught in a gesture, and how the dry sparks of their eyes flickered with the sheen of spiders.

And he would halt until Isabel too had looked. "Are you envious?" he asked, "because you are not one of them? Then console yourself." But he saw that she studied his greed and read his admiration. "Take comfort," he said again. "They are not free to become themselves. They are different from you." "Yes," Isabel answered, "they are prettier." "They will grow corrupt. Time will overwhelm them. They have only their one moment, like the butterflies." "Looking at butterflies gives pleasure." "Yes, it is a kind of joy, little dear, but full of poison. It belongs to the knowledge of rapid death. The butterfly lures us not only because he is beautiful, but because he is transitory. The caterpillar is uglier, but in him we can regard the better joy of becoming. The caterpillar's fate is bloom. The butterfly's is waste."

They stopped, and around them milled and murmured the girls in their wispy dresses and their little cut-off capes, and their yellow hair, whitish hair, tan hair, hair of brown-and-pink. The lithe, O the ladies young! It was all sweet there among the tousled bebies wormy with ribbon streamers and sashes, mock-tricked with make-believe gems, gems pinned over the breast, on the bar of a barrette, aflash even in the rims of their glasses. The alien gaiety took Fishbein in; he rocked in their strong sea-wave. From a record shop came a wild shiver of jazz, eyes unwound like coils of silk and groped for other eyes: the street churned with the laughter of girls. And Fishbein, arrested in the heart of the whirlpool, was all at once plunged again into war with the street and with America, where everything was illusion and all illusion led to disillusion. What use was it then for him to call O lyric ladies, what use to chant O languorous lovely November ladies, O lilting, lolling, lissome ladies—while corrosion sat waiting in their ears, he saw the maggots breeding in their dissolving jewels?

Meanwhile Isabel frowned with logic. "But it's only that the caterpillar's future is longer and his fate farther off. In the end he will die too." "Never, never, never," said Fishbein; "it is only the butterfly who dies, and then he has long since ceased to be a caterpillar. The caterpillar never dies. —Neither to die nor to be immortal, it is the enviable state, little dear, to live always at the point of beautiful change! That is what it means to be extraordinary—when did I tell you that?" He bethought himself. "The first day, of course. It's always best to begin with the end—with the image of what is desired. If I had begun with the beginning I would have bored you, you would have gone away . . . In my ideal kingdom, little dear, everyone, even the very old, will be passionately in the process of guessing at and preparing for his essential self. Boredom will be unnatural, like a curse, or unhealthy, like a plague. Everyone will be extraordinary."

"But if the whole population were extraordinary," Isabel objected, "then nobody would be extraordinary."

"Ssh, little dear, why must you insist on dialectics? Nothing true is ever found by that road. There are millions of caterpillars, and not one of them is intended to die, and they are all of them extraordinary. *Your* aim," he admonished, as they came into the darkened neighborhood beyond Big Road, "is to avoid growing into a butterfly. Come," he said, and took her hand, "let us live for that."

The Horse That Got Caught in Barbed Wire

LAWRENCE STURHAHN

THE MAN and his son were standing beside the loading pens waiting for the trucks to come. The road into his ranch house turned off the main highway a quarter of a mile west and came down past them, a double track wheel scar across the flat prairie. Having driven his remaining thirty head of steers into the pens, he stood with the boy, looking back the way they had ridden out that morning, sensing the dry ground with the harsh sun above it, a tumbleweed that bounced, rolling across his field of vision, and the three-strand barbed wire fence that ran beside the right side of the road.

"When are they coming, Pop?"

The country had dried up and turned into dust; the fields he had planted in grain for winter feed had blown away and each summer the water in the well had fallen lower. Now the electric pump jumped and clattered, pumping, sucking dry, then pumping again hopelessly; and the water it brought up tasted like dirt. Why in the first two years of the drought, he remembered, ten head of cattle had died.

Behind the two of them as they waited the standing horses dozed, eyes half shut against the sun. The red stallion switched his tail, the gaunt cattle inside the pens milled restlessly as suddenly the boy yelled, "I hear the truck motors." He climbed quickly up the side of the pens, perching on the top rail, "You hear them? I can see them coming from up here."

The pick-up came first, the semi-trailers with rack bodies to carry the cattle following. Each vehicle turned off Highway 80 to bounce empty down the grade, dust pluming out suddenly from beneath the wheels as they struck the soft pan. Roaring down towards the pens and stopping, they pulled up in line, like a military

convoy, heavy, high, brutal radiators dominating the man who waited. The dust cloud swirled forward, settling as the fat man swung down from the pick-up which had *Acme Stock Sales* lettered on the door. He took off the wide brimmed, white Stetson hat and beat the dust out of it against his leg, saying, "Howdy Sam, look like it might rain? Haha." Then he stopped smiling, seeing the man with his cattle inside the pens and the dry desert behind him. The fat man put the hat on again, turned and waved and the engine of the first truck in line roared as it swung side and maneuvered, the driver cutting his wheels expertly to bring the trailer up against the loading chute. The other drivers dropped the gate crashing down and then they started to yell and prod the cattle with long goads up the chute and into the truck bed, hooves clattering, eyes wide and crazy with fright.

"You gonna put all my pop's cattle in those trucks, Mr. Sears?"

"Why I sure am, Sonny. That ain't so many."

It was hard for the boy's father to watch and he had turned away. Making himself busy he stripped the saddle off the stallion, folded the striped, woven Indian blanket across it carefully before he led the horse 300 yards down the barbed wire to the gate. Inside he slipped the bridle and slapped the horse on the flank, watched him run a short distance, then stop and turn his head back to the man, his ears up, his head high, inquiring. All the seven years of drought the horse had grown more beautiful, with powerful shoulders, a stiff black tail and sleek red coat. And now his wife didn't try to hide the accusation in her eyes— towards him or towards the horse he did not know which, but he had come to answering it violently, telling her she didn't know. No damn horse was some kind of magic, in some way to blame, no matter what she said it looked like.

Sadly the man shook his head. Even now he had not decided what he was going to do with his two horses. Why with only the last things to be loaded now, and the cattle going—gone. It was finished, there was nothing holding them; he looked around the horizon. To the south were the mountains; a tourist roaring west on Highway 80, just turning his eyes an instant from the rushing road, might miss them, or catching only a glimpse in the mist sixty

miles away, think they were a mirage, or dust, or clouds. They were not clouds, the man thought, that was for sure. The horse still watched him proudly as he went back outside the wire, shutting the gate behind him.

Sears was finishing the loading. He and the remaining driver swung the back gate on the last trailer and then Sears turned, taking off his yellow gloves and stuffing them in his hip pocket. "Well now . . ."

"You might as well leave the chute open," the man said as the truck engine started and it pulled away, grinding up the incline to the highway, then accelerating, going away down the road in the flat sunlight under the hard, colorless sky. The boy climbed slowly down the timbers of the empty pens. "You want to give us a lift back to the ranch?" the man said to Sears. "We would take it as a favor. Leave the horses out here where there's a little grass, at least. For a couple of days," he went on, still putting it off in his mind. The fat man looked at his watch, taking it by a fob in the shape of a gold steer's head out of his pocket, and then he nodded. "Take the mare down to the gate and put her in," the man said to his son. "We'll pick you up." He bent down and lifted the saddle, bridle and striped saddle blanket, threw them into the bed of the pick-up and climbed up in beside Sears.

"You have to sign this," Sears said to him, giving him the consignment order. "I almost forgot."

"Why, it's not like you to forget, is it?"

"I reckon it isn't," Sears said ashamed. "Listen, it's hard times for me too, Sam. It's hard times all over you see." He started the engine, let in the clutch and they drove down the dirt track by the barbed wire to pick up the man's son.

"I reckon it is."

It was the screech of the brakes when Sears stopped the truck by the gate that spooked the stallion. He had been watching the gate warily as the boy put the mare in with him when he heard the noise and suddenly he snorted, threw up his head and started, running first parallel to the fence, flying, his powerful legs pounding the ground.

"Holy Jesus Christ," the man yelled, "he's gonna run through

the wire!"

Impotently the two men sat in the cab of the truck, watching as the fence broke the horse's great stride, the wire taking the sudden violent strain, breaking out three posts, cracking sharply like rifle shots, before it snapped, backlashed, and threw the horse headfirst into the ground, and the broken wire whipped back.

"Quick!" he said and the truck jerked forward. And as they drove towards the broken place in the wire, they saw, through the windshield, the horse struggle up, once, twice, then fall back, tangled in a bundle of broken wire. Finally they were there and before the truck had stopped he was out and had taken the wire cutters off his saddle in the back, tried with frantic hands to cut the horse free.

"Mother of God," Sears said softly, looking down after he had climbed slowly and ponderously out of the truck. "He's finished, Sam," Sears said, seeing the man kneeling on the ground by the horse, the front of his levis and shirt covered with the blood, the tears in his eyes, and the wire cutters hanging in his hand. "You ask me and maybe it is a good thing."

"Shut up you son-of-a-bitch. What do you know?" His face was streaked with the blood and his eyes filled with wild, unreasoning sorrow.

"Well, I know what they say," the fat man said sullenly. "They say in town that your missus says when that horse is dead the rain will come." He looked up at the sky, "Now the horse is gonna die, there's no doubt of that."

"Pop! Pop!" The boy had come up; he reined the mare up and she snorted and side-stepped daintily around what was lying on the ground.

"If he gets up and stands on his feet so you can get the wire off him," Sears said and the boy's father clenched his fists as though he were going to reach down and with pure strength lift the horse himself. "But I am thinking you better go and get your gun and shoot him," he said. "I am an old animal man and it's the most sufferable thing you can do."

"Can you let him try to live?"

Sears shrugged his shoulders. Then he took the watch out of

his pocket again. "I ain't got all day." He lifted the saddle out of the back of his truck and dropped it on the ground. But it seemed that he was reluctant—he hesitated, lighting a cigarette before he climbed up in the truck, started the engine and backed around. Finally he just said, "Well, you don't want me to take you over to your place to get your gun?" The boy turned his head uncertainly from his father to the fat man in the truck, but his father shook his head dumbly. "Well OK," Sears said then and he drove away, the dust cloud rising up and swirling back over them.

"Is he going to die?" the boy asked. And then the father looked down and saw how the sleek hide of his horse had now fallen loose so he saw the configurations of bone beneath it and he remembered the dead horses and cows in the fields in front of St. Lo, lying there with their stiff obscene legs sticking out, stinking in the fields along with the dead men. He looked and saw the liquid, tortured eyes, the terrible wire cuts across the chest, the swirling nest of bloody wire still wrapped in the flesh. "Will he, pop?" the boy questioned relentlessly, nudging him to gain his attention. "Will he? And then will the rain come?"

"No."

"He won't die?" the boy asked, a hope in his voice.

"No, the rain won't come. If he dies or not, the rain won't come because he is dead."

They had waited in the hot sunlight until the great ragged ribs had puffed open and the flies had come, until the stallion's eyes had fallen almost shut, then the man finally shook his head. He changed the saddle on the mare, putting on his own in place of the boy's which he left lying on the ground. "I'll get the gun and come back. Alone," he added.

"Oh," the boy said softly, and then after a pause, "and when you shoot him he will be really dead?" He seemed puzzled and his father stopped to look at him, not understanding.

"Why, either way," he then agreed, thinking to the horse, you are lucky because it is going to be quick for you, not slow starvation in a country the desert has come back to.

"Ma always said when he was dead then the rain would come."

"It is not true," the man said harshly. "I told you once so do not

ask me again."

"Pop," the boy asked, "what is it like when it rains?"

"*Rain?*" the man was surprised but then he remembered it had not really rained in seven years. "Rain," he repeated. "The clouds cover over the sky and there is no sunlight, then drops of water fall on the ground. It makes the ground wet, makes creeks and rivers; it makes grass grow for the cows to eat."

"If you shoot him that rain won't come," the boy repeated rhythmically. He raised his arm suddenly, pointing south. "Are those clouds? There, you see?" The man jerked his head around, and saw them, lying against the mountain tops, a thin stratus layer.

"Why I don't see any clouds," he lied. "Now what you see is just a mirage. A mirage is something scientific: a reflection in the heat from the desert and the sun." The man now mounted the mare and hurriedly pulled the boy up behind him, turned her head away from the fallen stallion, lying, tied in the tendrils of the bloody wire, like a package from the store.

The boy kept his head turned back, looking from the horse to the faint mirage lying along the mountains, sixty miles away. "And when Grandpa went away was it because he was dead too?"

"Yes."

"Why did you say he went away on a trip?"

"Why, you were too young and I didn't know how to tell you." The gaunt mare walked across the prairie, drawing farther and farther from the fallen horse. They crossed a little dip and began to climb, and when the boy looked back he could no longer see the horse lying there. "And am I old enough now?" he asked.

"I reckon you are," his father said guiltily.

"Tell me the truth then." In the pale, hot light of the sun the man rode, slouched to one side and against the mare and her double burden the wind brought a fine swirl of powdered dust and brought too, passing the steer skeleton—bleached white and picked clean except at the edge of the hooves and across the top of the skull where small garnishes of red, furry hide still persisted—coming on the wind, the faint odor of decay. The boy put his small dirty hand over his nose, saying "phewwww," and the man wished to tell him all he knew. Perhaps then he would not be hurt by the things which he

would find out. If there was some way of saying it in reference to his dying horse, some way that would make the suffering worthwhile. Why if he could say it truthfully now he would never have to lie again; but he couldn't think of the words and he cursed himself that he was so stupid. He turned his head slowly, letting his eyes go quickly across the mountains, seeing the clouds there, faint—high—there. Could a man ever tell his son?

"Tell me now," the boy said, and the man felt the small hands clutching at his belt, digging into his back.

"When a man dies he goes away—" he started.

"To heaven," the boy said eagerly. "The good people go there."

"Well there is not any difference," his father said. "A God don't have a heaven without him being big enough to let any man come to it." The mare had climbed the slope and now on the crest they could look down, and see a mile away, the house and barn. The dirt road followed across the prairie, crossing through the dry creek; the barbed wire beside it, stopping at the gate and cattle guard, then continuing. The mare started jerkily down the long, gentle slope, planting her legs to take up the burden of the man and his son, the reins hanging loosely beneath her neck. "And Grandpa is in Heaven," the boy said, "can he look down and see us?"

"If he wants I would say. But maybe you do not look down once you are there."

"And is there rain in heaven?" the boy asked.

"Why yes," his fathered answered, "there is always rain in heaven and everything is green."

His wife was waiting behind the screen door as they walked in the dust up to the front of the three-room house from which the paint was peeling back in curling strips from the siding. "Well, what's happened?" She opened the door, moving back so they could pass by for she was eight months pregnant with their second child now. "Something happened—they didn't come for the cattle?"

The boy looked quickly at his father's face. "Red Wing ran through the bobbed wire," he said excitedly.

He looked at his wife, seeing again how old she had become, how the dry years had taken the saption out of her, leaving her face tight and shiny, her sunbleached hair pulled severely back.

"I'm going out to shoot him," he said finally, looking away from her but not before the sudden triumphant gleam appeared in her eyes. "It's too late anyhow you know," he said softly, trying to explain to her because he still loved her and they had shared many things. "It could rain from now to Christmas and it would be too late even, with the cattle gone."

She had moved when he looked again. Now she was by the door, looking out, her eyes on the mountains. She nodded her head but he knew she didn't believe him; she believed that when the horse was dead it would miraculously change.

"There are clouds over the mountains," she said flatly and the boy ran to the door and looked out. When he turned to his father, his face was sharp, suspicious, suddenly the image of his mother's face.

"You said they weren't clouds!" He looked at his mother. "He said that it was just something scientific. *Didn't you?*" The eyes had come back to him. "You said that I was big enough to tell the truth to."

The man crossed to his wife and grabbed her arms, shaking her frail, ungainly body. "God damn it to hell!" Her head fell forward as he shook her but she did not resist him and suddenly he was ashamed and he kneeled down, taking his son's hands. "You stay here and help your mother. Get everything together because we are pulling out." He said it to the boy but he meant it for the woman. "We are leaving here, you hear?"

"They ain't clouds, are they? They are what you said," the boy pleaded and the father looked up to see the scorn in his wife's eyes before he nodded quickly, ashamed. "And if you shoot him then he won't be hurting anymore?"

"I am telling you that it is so, son." He stood up quickly so the boy wouldn't see the tears in his eyes and he went to the corner of the room where the carbine leaned against the wall, working the lever suddenly and violently, so the cartridges jumped out of the top of the receiver and clattered in a semi-circle on the floor around his feet. And when it was empty he leaned down and retrieved one of the 30-30 WCF soft nosed bullets and put it in the pocket of his levis. His wife's eyes were flat as he said, "Get the last of it together."

Let Tommy help and I'll be back," and then he went to the door, carrying the empty carbine in his hand, but just before he went out he turned to her again, facing the quiet superiority. "What do you want him to do? Believe in your crazy superstitious world. Grow up believing in it. Why, there's no spirits in the world and you are wrong; God damn you; you are wrong. I know that at least."

Just before he rode out of the yard the boy came running out of the house. He was calling in a high shrill voice and his father reined up angrily. "I told you to stay and help your mother."

The boy looked up at him without fear. "He isn't a bad horse like she says."

"God forgive her," his father said. "He isn't a bad horse. Why, it is not even his fault that he was never just an ordinary horse, always different, a little loco. You should remember that: that when you are different then people take it out on you because they think you are mocking them. I don't know whether it is better but you should remember it." The boy was looking at him waiting, puzzled but the man only kicked the mare, turned her head and rode out in the dust.

I was spoiled by having a good small ranch, a pretty wife and a good herd of cows, the man thought as he passed the dry skeleton of his steer. Twenty head had frozen the past winter and this is what had finally finished it. After all the dry years the sudden violent inundation of snow. And when it melted, poured into the washes, rushed in muddy rages between the banks, sweeping the debris away and leaving the prairie the way it had been before . . . he shook his head. The ranch was going for the mortgage and he'd consigned the remainder of his herd to Sear's Acme Sales to pay his debts. He was getting out clear as a man could get out after ten years with nothing left.

At the stock auction in Junction City seven years before they had brought out the two-year old bay stud with the pointed ears and proud head, the wild look in the eye. Sitting there he had thought to himself, I want you, you crazy-eyed horse and he had paid fifty bucks for him. The horse trader had said, "Well Mister, you don't know what a fine animal you is getting because you can plainly see this here horse has got A-rab blood in him." And looking proudly

at him, he had said in return, "Why yes, I can see it."

That fifty bucks was just half the first real money which he had cleared from the place and in everything there was promise; now all around him was the desert, stretching as far as a man could see. He could remember laughing. And he remembered wondering what his pregnant wife would say and then how angry she had been at his extravagance. He had kidded her because he felt so good and he had said, "Why, honey, the horse is beautiful and we need him around here since you got so fat and ugly."

The two big birds with dirty black plumage and naked hooked necks looked at him as he approached but only one flew off, flapping heavily into the air and circling in wide slow flight. A dull anger engulfed him at the bird's obvious magical fore-warning of death and he half raised the carbine to share the killing. Then he remembered he only had one cartridge and as he rode closer the second, braver bird took off too; now both of them circled in the hot sky. At least, he thought, they would wait for death.

Feeling the oiled, smooth, impelling action he worked the lever on the carbine down and dropped the shining brass cartridge into the top of the receiver. Everything was mechanical now as he swung down from the mare, holding the barrel of the carbine high. He looked south and saw the clouds and then he raised the carbine until the muzzle pointed at the flat part of the horse's skull, directly between the lidded, unfocused eyes. Gently he squeezed the trigger.

The mare jumped violently backward at the flat, sharp report. Ejecting the empty, smoking cartridge and taking his son's saddle from where he had left it on the ground, he mounted and the vultures spiralled down implacably from the bright sky. He kicked the tired little mare into a trot because his son was waiting for him to come back. He felt the need to hurry because his wife was waiting too and he had to make up for ten years which he had just lost and behind him in the distance the thin cirro-stratus lay against the tops of the mountains; soon they would dissipate in the hot desert wind.

The Quarrel

TAPATI MOOKERJI

EVERY FAMILY worth its salt has some greatly prized possession, always. With us it was the cuckoo clock that my grandfather had bought second-hand from his employer, Mr. McDougall, when that worthy gentleman left India some sixty years back. The clock held pride of place in our humble home. Everything else in it—the shining brass pots and pans and thalis, the rush mats, the pictures of gods and goddesses on the wall, the spinning wheel in one corner, the sleek little cow in the cowshed—was all purely India, and the one incongruous thing was the gilt cuckoo clock, hanging high on the wall. It had been hanging there, chiming witness to many births, marriages and deaths. It had chimed a welcoming fanfare to the new-born babes and had wheezed a sad farewell to departing souls. It had also linked its foreign voice to conch-shells which blew to welcome the new brides.

I can truthfully say that the cuckoo clock was part of my life, the best part too, for, did not the boys of my class come shuffling in, full of awe, to gaze with dumb envy at grandfather's clock? Was it not proof that there was magic in this ordinary world, if a cuckoo could come flying out of the clock at every ordained hour of the day and sing out "cuckoo" in a melodious voice? I slept more securely than the other boys because at night too the cuckoo would be singing out the happy, serene hours of rest, a guardian angel of our home.

But today was the most ill-omened day of my life, for my mother, my sweet gentle mother, had hurled the palm leaf fan with an insulting word to the cuckoo clock. Can you understand the terrible portents of the words at the cuckoo clock? Yes, you can, for you are a sympathetic reader and besides you were a child once. I will tell you how it started. It started as a strange day, for since daybreak there was a harsh and bitter quarrel between my father and mother. It had subsided into a rumbling earthquake whenever my grandmother came into the room, for then my mother would

draw the end of her sari over her head and depart to the kitchen. Then the old lady went out to bathe in the river with my sisters and widowed aunt and the quarrel flared up again like a devouring flame of bitterness. My parents did not seem to notice me. I who lay sick with fever upon a charpoy of coconut ropes with a kantha over me. I shivered, not with fever, but with fear of this new thing that I saw, a quarrel that would not be quenched between the people I loved most in the world. It was worse than being flogged by panditji in the school, more humiliating, more hurting than anything I had experienced.

The crisis came when my father shouted loudly, "Stop screaming like a fisher-woman, mother of Durga, and bring me the hash that you prepared, if you have not burnt it to charcoal." Now, an insult to my mother's cooking was something that was just not done in our family. Even my critical grandmother of the caustic tongue would only say, "My son's foolish father chose a dark-skinned girl for his only son, true, but she is a Lakshmi in cooking." Then I would see the proud, happy glance my father shot at my mother who would, before she modestly lowered her eyelids, smile back at him mischievously with her wonderfully lustrous eyes. Once, not long ago, when I was hidden under the big carved bed, stealthily eating green pickled mangoes, I heard my father say to my mother, "My dark beauty, my little nilmoni flower," and my mother's answering happy sigh as she whispered back something.

Were these bitterly quarrelling people the same that I knew? Or, was the world an evil, dangerous place, after all? My world seemed to turn topsy-turvy. My mother shrieked back in a voice like a stranger's, "Oh! So it is hash I serve you, toiling day and night for you! So you think it is hash . . .?" and burst out in tears which seared my child's heart. And when she had banged down the flat wooden seat for him and rattled down the thali with its rice and vegetables, she could not forgo her habit of years and sat down before him with the palm leaf to fan away flies while he ate. But she kept her eyes averted and her chin quivered.

The quarrel, then, was only kept on a leash and would growl out in its horrible obscene voice as soon as father's meal was over. I lay sick with apprehension and my world was no more a place of

love and warmth. Then the cuckoo clock struck and the blessed little household god of a cuckoo trilled out the hour. Here was something that remained unchanging in a changing world. But no, before the last chime died away, my father jumped up, for he would have to catch the train for his office. My mother, goaded beyond endurance because father's food lay half-eaten and the clock had struck or because she would have to keep the quarrel imprisoned in her raging heart until evening, flung the palm leaf fan, at the cuckoo, saying, "You. . . you black-faced, ill-omened bilayeti bird, can't the gods choke your eternal cuckooing!" We froze, my father and I, in the one same motion of horror, and my poor mother, aghast at the terrible, seditious thing that her tongue had uttered, again fell crying in choking sobs on the cracked cement floor. The cup of my bitterness ran over, when father spoke in a new harsh voice, "Woman, woman, have you lost your sense? You, mother of my children, to insult the memory of my dead grandfather, he who lovingly brought you to this home of ours?" My mother, the realization of her iniquity upon her, sobbed the more piteously, now softly beating her hand to her forehead. Father looked scornfully at her and said, "Listen, mother of Durga, I have borne enough of your foolishness today, and that clock will have to stop before I speak to you again." He had uttered the most terrible oath that he could think of. My burning head seemed to burst with the pressure of that oath, for I knew my father to be a man of his word. My mother was so stunned that even her sobs stopped. But she was a wonderful woman, my mother. Her tear-drenched eyes flashed as she raised them to father's angry ones and said, "So be it. But you shall see, father of Durga, that if I am a devoted wife, the gods themselves will see that that clock does stop its voice." And she flounced out of the room.

I *hated* my parents in that moment, and the cuckoo clock too, the three things I loved best in the world. In my child's soul a little seed of doubt and distrust was forcing its poisonous roots. Never again would the world be right, for the cuckoo clock would not stop and peace would not be restored between my father and my mother.

While the jackals howled, the lemon-yellow moon rose. I was tossing in a fretful sleep, counting the hours on the cuckoo clock with misery, when a half-muffled sound made me wide awake. It

was dead of night and my eyes discerned with a shock of surprise the figure of my father in the blankety dark of that room. He was carrying something, a ladder that was used for plucking the pumpkins from the roof and also for winding the cuckoo clock. What was he doing with it at dead of night with no noise but the sigh of the seared leaves falling outside? Then I saw what he did, and my heart really stopped beating. My father had climbed up the ladder and was doing something to the cuckoo clock. In a flash of childhood wisdom, I understood that he was stopping, actually stopping the cuckoo clock!

At that moment of wild joyous revelation, another sound petrified me. It was like the tinkling of bells, and I recognized it. On puja days, my mother took off her every-day bangles of glass and gold to put on the new festive ones and when she dropped her numerous bangles from her wrist, the sound was like little tinkling bells. But why should she be baring her wrists in the middle of the night? The answer came to my mind that it was because she wanted to make no noise. Then her saffron-clad figure came into the room, softly lit up by the light of an earthen chirag held in one hand. I saw that she lugged a high packing box by one hand. She looked once at me and, satisfied that I slept, she made her way towards the cuckoo clock. I could hear her breath coming in frightened flutters, for my mother was terrified of the dark. It was with a shock I discovered—it was unbelievable—my mother had come to stop the cuckoo clock too!

But she, seeing a figure on the top of a ladder, dropped the chirag and the wooden box and gave a choked cry of terror, and she fell fainting to the ground. Fever and all, I was out with a dash and the ladder fell with a crash that roused the whole household. In the commotion that followed I cared little. For while we, father and son bent over my mother, I hugging her work-worn feet and crying. "Mother! Do not be frightened, for it was only father," my father gently brushed her forehead with his hands and murmured something. My mother at last opened her eyes. In the winking little light of the earthen lamp, I saw with a great sigh of relief those wonderful eyes of my mother smile, as only hers could, right into my father's frightened ones.

And then, still smiling with eyes and lips, she pulled my hair as I loved best and murmured to me, "What time is it, my jewel-gold one?" My father's face then broke into one of his rare smiles as he looked up at the cuckoo clock and said in a voice as exalted as a victor's, "Why! ha! mother Kali! our cuckoo clock has stopped—for the first time in all these years!" The rest of the household gave just one gasp of unbelieving horror.

As for me, that little seedling of unhappiness and distrust in my soul just shrivelled up and died, for once again the world was all right. For I understood in my child's heart a great truth, that if the mechanism that makes a cuckoo clock go is a mysterious and wonderful one, that which made my father stop it was even more mysterious and even more wonderful.

Festivals of Autumn

BYRON COLT

Already fires return to the plain, with molten jellies
in the sea and the ice-orchids of cirrus.
Humid fireflies leave the abandoned railroad tracks
and cellars.
Tomorrow St. Luke's summer and the stormless hills.
From the shore we watch the waves turn molten: toboggans
of shadow and icy slopes;
A machine denounces the latest manoeuvres; the cities hatch
their light on the marshes,
And the streams of silence miss and hook into space,
Bearing another year—going like torpedoes
With haywire Leonids among starry signs
Lucky as the Horsehead and an ace of spades,
The cumulus boiling in starlight.

Rain God and the Radio

KARTAR SINGH DUGGAL

Translated from the Punjabi by the author.

HE NEVER had a holiday; such was the nature of his work. As a matter of fact, on holidays it was all the more necessary that the city roads be sprinkled so that there was less dust. The Municipal Committee had several vans to do this job. He drove one of them.

There were times when, for months, not a drop of rain would fall and he had to spend every single day, from the early hours of the morning to late in the evening, emptying his water tank on long dusty roads. On hot summer afternoons, it was not so bad. The smell that rose from the hot parched earth had for him the musky warmth of the mother's body to the baby nuzzling for her breast. On cold winter days it was different. He had, frequently, to smash the ice on the surface before he could get water. It used to be bitterly cold but the long lonesome roads had to be sprinkled.

The only thing which broke this monotonous pattern of existence was rain. Rain meant a holiday for him. Then God did the work and he rested.

At times when he went to bed he prayed, "O God, let there be rain so that I can sleep till the afternoon." Sometimes his prayer would be answered and it would rain during the night. He would get up as usual in the morning but get into bed again. He would keep lying till every inch of his body was relaxed, till he was thoroughly rested and bored with being in bed.

Then he got married.

His wife Viro was a simple domestic type. Her husband did not change his way of life even after marriage. He left home before she was up and returned long after the women of the neighbourhood had come back from the bazaar after their evening shopping with their husbands. Viro hoped that, perhaps, when her child was born, things would be different; he might want to play with the baby and stay at home a little longer.

Viro had a son but it made no difference to her husband's routine. Even when he was free, he would go out to gossip with the neighbours or play cards under the *peepal* tree.

In the morning, while her son was still asleep, she wanted her husband to take her out for a stroll in the Municipal Park, like the husband of the woman across the street. In the evenings she used to put antimony in her boy's eyes and dress him up in pretty clothes. But his father would never return in time to see the boy in all his finery and full of fun.

One evening, before the night of the full moon, Viro saw all the women of the neighbourhood making preparations to visit the temple. At night she asked her husband why they could not also go to the Gurdwara the next morning. "Ask God for rain. Then we too can go to the Gurdwara," he mumbled in reply and dozed off to sleep.

That night it rained.

Next morning the family went to the Gurdwara. On the way back they bought a lot of junk from the bazaar and also went to the Municipal Park. In the evening, the son sat and played on the father's belly and they both spent many hours talking and laughing. That night Viro was pleased with herself; there was light in her window till the early hours of the morning, till the wick of the lamp had burnt itself out.

Once having granted her prayer, it seemed as if God had forgotten all about rain.

Viro spent some days reminiscing of the holiday they had so enjoyed. But life was becoming dull again. She began to dislike her home and envy the lot of her neighbours.

A month went by. The next full-moon day came. Her neighbours in their homes were agog with excitement. Women dyed their *dupattas* in vivid colours. Men pressed their beards and twirled their moustaches. Viro heard them plan their days at the bazaar and the Gurdwara.

That night she pleaded with her tired, drowsy husband and told him of the full moon. He answered again, "You ask God for rain and we will also go to the Gurdwara," and then fell asleep. Viro sat up in bed and prayed in fervent whispers: "O God, let there be

rain; O God! let there be rain." She fell asleep praying with her hands folded in supplication. The sound of thunder woke her up at midnight. There was a flash of lightning and it began to rain.

Early morning the whole family went to the Gurdwara for thanksgiving. On the way back they passed through the bazaar, the Municipal Park, and called on their relations in the city. The day went by full of happiness.

Viro had wanted to buy a border for her *duppatta*: she remembered this after she came back. The bazaar was too far off and her son was tired and irritated. It was too late to go out again, but she could not get the border out of her mind. Before falling off to sleep she prayed, "Dear God, let it rain again. Just once more." She felt ashamed of herself. It was like asking the priest for *prasad* a second time.

All night she tossed in bed racked with nightmares. She dreamt that she was wandering famished and thirsty on a vast desert, of losing her way in a jungle, and of dropping down a ravine. Her son's crying woke her up just as the grey light of dawn was dispelling the dark. She rubbed her eyes hard. It was raining.

Viro was frightened, she stood by the window looking at the rain and trembling with fear.

She shook off her nervousness and got ready for the Gurdwara. The family went out again. She bought her border and squandered another ten rupees in the bazaar.

In the afternoon, her sister and brother-in-law came to call on them. They had to stay on that day and the following day and night because it would not stop raining. Her sister's husband was agitated. He wanted to catch the train to his village but the torrent of rain continued. Viro had a feeling that if she ordered the rain to stop, it would stop. She had just to utter the word and the sky would be cleared of the clouds. The more her guests worried, the more confident she became. They had to catch the eleven o'clock train and it was already past nine. Their discomfiture was not without reason. Seeing their plight, Viro said casually: "It will stop at ten o'clock. You can leave then."

Exactly at ten o'clock it stopped raining.

Her sister and sister's husband were too happy at being able to

depart to notice the coincidence. Viro's husband did not notice it either, but Viro could not get it out of her mind.

While she was doing her daily chores, washing her husband's clothes or sweeping the courtyard, she would pause and recall how the rain had come and gone at her bidding and she felt more and more pleased with herself. She would spend hours at the window looking up and smiling at the sky. She felt she knew somebody there who smiled back at her. And she felt happier with life.

One thing disturbed Viro's hours of quiet communion with the sky; the neighbour's new radio set . . . It blared forth morning, afternoon and evening, without a moment's break. She tried to plug her ears with her fingers, stuff them with cotton wool, but there was no escape from the insidious sound of the radio. It not only pierced through her ears but also burst into the portals of her mind; it pervaded her entire being.

After some time, Viro found herself listening and even enjoying the music that came over the air. She began to know many songs by heart and would sing them to herself. Even her son began to hum radio songs in his babyish accent. The milkman, the grocer and the sweeperwoman all sang radio tunes as they went about their daily tasks.

One evening Viro was in her neighbour's house listening to the radio. After the music, a voice announced that it would rain in some places; there would also be thunder and lightning, possibly a hailstorm.

The weather forecast was like a smack in Viro's face. How could the radio tell whether it would rain or not? It was not possible!

That night she was awakened by the sound of thunder; it was pouring. A severe hail-storm followed the rain. Viro could not sleep any more.

When the fullmoon night came again, Viro prayed for rain. She prayed earnestly, with clasped hands, all night. She looked at the sky with longing. Merrily the stars twinkled there and the moon smiled back at her. There were no clouds nor rain; the radio said the weather would be dry.

A month went by and another fullmoon night came. Viro thought of her God. She prayed with tears in her eyes, made

promises of offerings; not a drop fell from the clear blue sky. Only the stars twinkled and the large full moon smiled at her: the radio said the dry weather would continue.

Day after day the radio prophesied dry weather. Yet another fullmoon night came. This time Viro fasted and prayed with greater fervour than ever before but without any result. Her neighbours went, laughing and talking, to the Gurdwara. Her husband went to work before the grey light of dawn broke over the east. She turned her face up to the starlit sky and asked bitterly, "What has happened to you, wretch?"

Let Us Be Silent

CHARLES ANGOFF

I have read
Aristotle and Plato
But neither can
Explain the potato.

I hear Spinoza
Is the model of calm
But I prefer
The petunia.

They say Zen Buddhism
And Existentialism
Have truth eternal,
But do they know
Where yesterday went?

Your metaphysics
Is my hieroglyphics.
Let us be content
And silent.

Poems by Samuel French Morse

Five for the City

I. THE ZOO

Even on Saturday nobody comes.
The lion house, the aviary lean
Into a wind so bitter cold it numbs
Their loneliness. The trees are picked as clean
As bones in this pale sunshine where the fox
Huddles for warmth and the tall llama stares
From its frozen run. The artificial rocks
Are thick with icfall, but the polar bears
Sleep soundly in their cave. A vagrant jay
Scatters the starlings scavenging the cage
The golden tiger learned to pace all day
Like Bajazet grown silent in his rage.
Only the keepers on their daily round
Trouble the landscape with a human sound.

II. RANGERS 1, BRUINS 0

Out of the city's darkling cold they swarm,
Attracted to the incandescent light
Like half-numbered flies. The thickened air grows warm,
Stale with a thousand smells above the white
Unshadowed faces waiting for a sign,
Until the buzzer sounds against the blare
Of variations on "Sweet Adeline"
The Wurlitzer pours out, and God is there,
A disembodied voice, to call the names:
LeBrun, Kamisky, Jones; at goal, Saint-John.
The artificial ice gleams in the flames

Of neon red and green. The game is on.
The crowd burns with a fury like the roar
That Judgment Day will bring. The Rangers score.

III. MUSEUM CONCERT

The solemn girls grown beautiful and tall
Listen a little to the blazing brass
Before they give their glances to the wall
Or see their turning image in the glass
Entranced to silence like the dancer there
In Sargent's portrait. Someone coughs (again).
The whispers echo down the marble stair,
Piano, pianissimo. And when
A pause comes in the piece, the very light
Glow with the purple bougainvillaea caught
Like a torn scarf blown out across the white
Mosaic wall. The fountain stirs, distraught,
And Gabrieli's music of the spheres
Falls from the courtyard window on deaf ears.

IV. THE AIRPORT

The beacon comes and goes, its wheeling light
Dividing dark from dark across the bay
Almost as far as Minot's on a night
As clear as this, though off the other way
It dims to nothing in the teeming glow
The city sheds. The pilot riding in
Ahead of schedule sees the field below
Pricked out with color and the dark begin
To tilt and fade. His wheels go down. The high
Uneasy roar gets louder, and a beam
Touches his wing. A Convair standing by
Taxies onto the runway as the scream
Of sirens chokes the air. But no one dies.
And no one sees the terror in his eyes.

V. THE COMMON

Advent begins. The Mayor lights the tree.
The carol singers gather at the crèche,
And "Jingle Bells" rings like eternity
Across the dusk. Joy to the world, the flesh,
And the Old Nick dressed up like Santa Claus
In this dark time before the shortest day,
The miracle to come at the year's pause,
For nothing else can hide the cold dismay
Of restlessness that swirls the first gray snow
Into the subway entrance like the news
Of war and peace on earth. The garlands glow;
Red, gold, and green. The waiting traffic skews
Into the suburbs, and the music thins
To a faint hush of sound. Advent begins.

Three Poems for Sam

I. BIRTHDAY POEM

He sees us sometimes as we are
And even what we would disguise
From him about ourselves, but keeps
A real world level with his eyes:
He catches fishes in his hands
From oceans deeper than the mind;
He spells out engines, colors, trees,
Like Adam's child, each in its kind,
As if he summoned from the light
A way of knowing now as true
And tolerant of certitude
As when the floating world was new,
Uncircumscribed. He talks to stones
Before philosophy and change.
The world is his, for what it means,
Familiar, so, and nothing strange,

Too dangerous for him to love,
As we well know, whose common sense
Has deafened us and made us dumb.
We envy him his innocence.

II. A RIDDLE FOR SAM

Here, here it is. And it is there,
The color shaken from the air,
In your small hand securely caught.
You hold it so, that you may see
Its substance, but you let it free
Again, like your own thought.
*The rock, the water, leaves you touch
Will change in time, though not so much
As light that moves the world, and space.
So long as light and space are new
All things shall be made clear to you,
And love be time and place.*

III. SAM'S PICTURE

"Make me a picture of a house,
And then a row of little trees,
A hill, a pond with my new boat.
But first the house. And then, the trees."
I cannot even draw a line
That's straight enough to be a roof.
But you don't mind. I make a house
With windows, door, and sagging roof,
And then some spruce or pointed firs
(Like Christmas trees), out in a field.
The hill is easy. But the pond
Looks like an egg on that white field
Beside the house. "And one big tree,"
You say, when you have climbed the hill.
"A waterfall down to the pond."
I draw a maple on the hill.

I put a sailboat in the pond.
I draw a boy, not much like you,
Beside the pond. "That must be me."
"How did you know that it was you?"

I ask. I put the cat in, too,
And in the tree a singing bird,
But cannot think what more to do.
The bird, at least, looks like a bird.

"We need a chimney for the house,
And I know how to draw the smoke."
Of course you do. The lines you make
Above the roof, blow up like smoke

In March, against a big blue sky.
"House, hill, cat, pond, bird, boat, and me,"
You say. And spruce and maple tree,
And your fine smoke that pleases me

Most of all the things I see.
You make the world as bright and new
As Adam's knowledge; and, for me,
You make imagination true.

May Day

The day I changed the water in the jar
We kept a crayfish in, I let him swim
Like Scorpio across the kitchen sink
And back again, which was not deep or far,

Though twice the clear ecliptic of his glass.
After the calm from which I dumped him out
Into a foamy waste of blinding light,
The roaring tap blew up a waterspout.

And delicate and strong as he was cold
To my uneasy touch, he proved to be

Too lively for my groping hand to hold.
The fury in his claw so startled me

I all but lost my head. But then he dived
Into the little maelstrom of the drain,
A Chinese puzzle. Spotted iron red
He rested there. I looked at him again.

Green as a growing stone his carapace
Showed under water, but my poking mind
Observed how well his claws had been designed
To catch and hold whatever they could find.

What did he live on? All he ever got
To eat were bits of leaf, a fly or two.
In his glass world he had a piece of quartz
For company. Sometimes his claws looked blue

When he reached up to fatten on the air.
I asked myself, and looked at him again,
For what good reason we had kept him there.
He was a kind of fable, and would lie

In wait for us, like malice in a dream,
Until we let him go. He barely stirred.
But let him go, I said, where we had caught
Him winking in the February stream.

The room was all reflections of the day
Outside. Down by the brook it was all May,
Marsh marigold and violets and sun. . . .
I scooped the crayfish back into his jar,

And called the boy to come along and see.
Where we climbed down the bank a swarm of flies
Filtered the shade. We found a sandy pool
To turn him into. The water felt as cold

As April to the touch, and all but shone
With mica on the surface, till he stirred
The bottom. Then he scuttled out of reach,
A rainbow for the weather, and was gone.

A Trip Outside

Our voyaging is local by the chart.
We set an easy course we make by heart,
If not by stars or instinct, due southeast,
Past Scylla, white with gulls, that changes least
Of all the landmarks we have grown to know,
Past Jordan's Cove, past Swan's, against the slow
Uneasy swells the August trades bring in
On a good day. The light gets golden thin
And the year's late meridian delays
A little, where the faintest summer haze
Blurs the dark islands: Long, to Burnt, to Round,
Across the weed-strung bay to Ironbound,
Till the world's substance changes in the mind—
Then, swinging east, we leave the bay behind.
The ragged bit of land for which we steer,
A point still true with distance but as near
As Labrador on Cabot's map, burns through
Imagined reefs and icebergs greeny blue,
A pleasure to ourselves like paradox
In these familiar waters where the rocks
Are known and marked, to put an end to doubt
And save us from the weather.

Going out

Like natives through the island passageway,
We kept the shore in sight until the bay
Widened to open sea, and tide and time
Lay far astern. We watched the water climb
The world's rough edge upended in the light:
We saw the whole black landmass foam to white
Awash with blue, and hills and trees and town,
A new Atlantis, seemed to tilt and drown,
Letting our fancy wild as wonder run
To ruin in a glistening of sun,
As if the sea itself, immensely wide,

Was the whole world, or all that would abide
Our voyaging. The summer's golden slack
Behind us in our wake burned almost black,
Then gold and black—we felt the windless glare
Too dazzled by a sense of space to care
About the land. We were Phoenicians then,
Then savages who watched the sea for men
In ships as big as gods. We could not name
The birds we saw, though they were still the same
Familiar coot and cormorants we knew,
And signs, at last. We watched them where they flew,
Like rapt adventurers, until the air
Sweetened with spruce and pine. Then we were there:
In the grassy shallows. And we went ashore
At a green spot out of the wind's roar,
But not so strange nor even so remote
As we had thought. We beached our open boat
As handily as Leif the Lucky's crew
Dropped sail here once and sang, before men knew
Whose land this was. They gave the world its shape,
And named the islands, found the deer and grape,
And built their fires against the outer dark
As they had done at home . . . but left no mark
For us to find or know that they had seen
The coast we claim, still black with evergreen.
This might have been the very place they stood . . .
As we could say it was.

Oh, it felt good
To be on land. The sun was in our bones
As warm as time. We skipped a hundred stones
Toward Ironbound and Stave, and we could see,
Across the water, shore and town and tree
Still close enough for us to see how wide
Of fact imagination and the tide
Had carried us. We walked half way around
The island to the point before we found
What we were looking for and heard the clang

Of some lost buoy. It rang and rang and rang,
Far off, far off, as musical as air,
Without a ship or landmark anywhere:
Only the blue horizon drawn so fine
Ocean and sky seemed one, without a line
To separate them, space enough and more
To satisfy a wish to be off shore.
But we were hungry, too. So we walked back
Across a meadow spotted gray and black
With fire too old to fear but burning still
In soft decay no second growth could kill,
To kindle in the rocks our little blaze
To make our picnic. Proud as castaways
We were, from some lost ship. We took our ease
Where we would catch the shifting of the breeze
Almost the very moment that the tide
Rippled across the cove to touch the wide
Still pool the kids explored, from which they brought
A treasury of starfish they had caught,
The ruffled kelp as long and shining wet
As a sea serpent, stones like milk and jet,
And limpets, crabs and urchins—all too rare,
Too wonderful to leave.

The stirring air

Freshens behind us now; the island gleams
A moment more; but now such distance seems
An optical illusion like the past
We carry with us always. Making fast
At that familiar mooring where we tied
The tender, for a moment we can ride
The long slow swell that foams across the reef
By which we take our bearings, like belief.
The bell-buoy clangs us back. For we are here
Where we had started from, and far and near
Become the very thing that time will be:
A miscellany, like the summer sea.

Caryl Chessman in the Afterworld

ALBERT HERZING

My fast race with the clock
That closed in with a click
Propelled me backwards, staggering, at
San Quentin, till I breathed
A choking, altered air,
Cyanide romping in my lungs
Like multiple and lyric tongues
Pressing against my palate, till
I paused a while
And reconsidered breathing. This was too late!
The scales of time and fate
Swerved back and forth, and forth
Out into the dark,
My trembling soul! . . .

Issue so dire
Rushed me from the earth
To a second, final birth
Within the Laws . . .

Bigger than mine, Death's cause
Stared me, eye to eye,
And eyed me down . . .
Until the gross erosions of my life
Were mercifully brief
Compared to this,

This loss of burning, for the damned prepared,
By them engendered, and by them endured,

This cold and listless nowhere, perching on
The edge of space, not quite oblivion
And not quite life—where life and death are one—

Thousands of shining, firmamental stars
Alone with silence and the light-years
Alone with time alone with tears

And where we dead, together, shall abide
Eternally side by side
And hand to hand, self-loathing and self-loathed,
Our skinny souls, unclothed
Before the eternal winds,
Jumping for the sins
Of each of us unless
Charity can bless
And Mercy soothe the pain
That I and Governor Brown
And thousands more must there abide,
The fire of our injustices still searing in each side.

The Man Who Did Not Want to Die

CAHİT SITKI TARANCI

Translated from the Turkish by Mark Glazer

He was the man who did not want to die;
They weren't able to cut his hands
Off the sun-baked apple branch;
They weren't able to stop
His flying feet on the endless road;
No hunter was to shoot
His eyes filled with the blue sky;
And his head was a golden leaf in the wind,
Which travels from Venus to Mars.
But his pulse had stopped,
And the coroner said,
"He is dead."

Mt. Atlas Cedars

(*Cedrus Atlantica*, North Africa)

JOHN M. RIDLAND

Winter's no wonder for these
cedars. They wear frost at all times.
A man could stand under one
and uphold the world on his shoulders—
they set the example, standing and
lifting the sky.

Poems by Jean Garrigue

For an Orchard Tree

For that tree with no fruit but its flower
And that flower the sum of its being
In wind, water, and air
I would like to speak, but who may speak
Of such a pure tree of flower?
Only some strain of song
About to ascend on a line light as vine
May translate this effect of flower
And agitation tranced in a bower.
The rose-dark stem,
The rose-backed flower.
To stand at the midmost of this tree
In the everywhere of its air . . .

Bees, their wings making diamond light
In that gauze of the wired beat
Of joy elate on its nourishment,
Feed there in the furious strength
Of creatures at the pitch of their bent.
To stand under the roof, by the wall of these flowers,
The intercrossed roof-tree boughs and light bars
Of boughs making walls
And as the peer bee lives on flower
To live as he does this hour,
Strewn over, the very eye strewn
With the light of the flower and the hum of light
Of the bee's nesting and the bee's rapt drone
In the iridescence of stamens gold-pronged
Tipped by the gold seed from the dark center . . .

Else how to measure this quality out,
 How to strain and figure it forth,
 How to balance the bee's vibrating of a fantastical wing,
 Frame of light thinner than wind,
 Against the bough colored the stain of fruit?
 Music and paint.

Leonardo's study of flowers

Camber of the petaled unfolding
 In a fold under fold involuting
 To the fringed seed swelling,
You are nearer the soul of the thing.
 Flowers so lightly drawn
 They dwell like the allegorical one
 Half emerged from, half meshed in the mists of the mind.

Standing in air dyed by the sun,
 Stamped, printed, designed over,
 So many flowers from the wood,
 So many petals to a stem
 Till the stem is lost to rose skin,
 Wood is pure floret, pure burgeonet
 Tendrilled and knotted and knobbed
 With the foiled deep rose just come
 From the vat of the bud, more crimson stained
 Than when, betaking of air it has inbreathed
 Another hue of its changing—
 Rose backed by the support of that which comes
 From the wood and's allowed by the bud
 To utter its syllable in a tinged cloud
 For which, in the slumber of winter,
 Hooded in summer, it waits and stands
 That for a week in spring
 It may expend to the last ounce of its sap
 And last strength of the wood root and stem
 Its birthday of being.

Ah, standing just here before
 Those ones gone over into flower, lying flat on air,

And others in a very twisted downshaft overcome
By the burden of flower bent down—
God's fire we owe a death to
In that sacrifice of the stem for its flower,
Earth for wood, wood for flower,
Even, at the base of the tree,
A few sprouting there . . .

For the Same Tree (II)

You boughs hung here with flower
By what strain may I trace
In wind, water, and air
By what line lithe as vine
May I there ascend,
Young tree of no fruit
But this pale bloom you bear,
To your effect of flower
Tranced in a bower?
"By flower so lightly limmed
It stands by paint or pen
As if in sun and wind
That will not warp nor wear—
By song that may shape
In air that it lives on
An unwithering garland.
How else may you translate
My drifts of rose and white,
My boughs so laden down
They are wood grown very wand
Of the crimson floret?"
Young tree, I too would sing
Of the flower that grows
Meshed in the mists of mind.

It is the allegorical thing,
It is the single sheaf that binds
Flower and what's dreamed upon
By the flower of its pure form.

A Note on Master Crow

A very portly crow
Black as a funeral,
Waddled on my lawn
And cocked his head when he cawed
To answer other fellows down the road,
Leaving his bill ajar
For several minutes after.
Because the grass was new cut
He also stumbled over clumps of it.
The bird was prodigal
Of matters comical
And also of the humor saturnine,
Being so black and big
In the crow and wing,
So awkward and so hoarse,
So stately and so coarse,
And with such a look,
Upholstered like a davenport,
As of broad-backed bishop
Or of crook.

For the Beauty of the Beau Monde

Being beautiful, all of your movements are
And moments ride like ships into an eager place.
Likewise your charm, as if you knew
We'd love you as you love yourself.
Such confidence is better than disinterestedness
At making others think you're really kind.

And yet that charm's as if at variance
With all an idle beauty needs
As if its glitter shone to prove to us
'You know how I love you' when actually—
But all we'd say of you is halfway guess,

Who know what you must be, and always smile
Who when you'd sigh would turn away
And if you'd frown would do so at your walls
When you're alone. But that is rare.
Who like to spend your life very publicly.

And thus you live so cleverly we cry.
Your name is like a shot against the heart
When we surmise, although you may not say
(Only your eyes will give the truth away)
You play at what we cannot guess
As if you knew a way to counterfeit
A gaiety from something in the rift
Your beauty also bred from, parasite,
And play for us as if at heart
You lived for someone else we cannot guess,

The only one who will resist,
The only one you may not subjugate
And who will keep your secrets quite intact,
For whom you need not learn your rules by rote
And need not smile nor dance,
And who's indifferent as death.

Poem

I open a door
And a moth comes in.
Welcome! I say and depart,
Leaving the moth to my clothes
Or those snares
The spider will spin in the dark.
Will he grow fat on my wool
Or the spider upon his heart?
Creature of that blundering race,
Of the horned brow and the furred face,
There at my door crying and fluttering
In the vegetable dew and the dark,
Like faces who haunt my night,
Ghost faces of my follies
Crying my heart, my heart,
Let me in, let me in from the dark.
But I have put out the fire, my
Dears. Only the spiders wait.

Time-Islanded

GUSTAV DAVIDSON

In this brief hour's eternity
wherein time-islanded I stand,
I cup the world's immensity
within my hand.

All that is hidden and revealed,
the shape of aeons still impearled,
breaks like foam upon a strand
and flowers in instant prophecy.

The Birthday of the Twenties

GORHAM MUNSON

THE LITERARY PHASE of the period called The Twenties began in a reprieve to the younger generation on November 7, 1918. A false report of an armistice was nevertheless a true carrier of the reprieve, and the delirious joy it set off turned into hope confirmed.

On that day I was a resident master at the Riverdale Country School which was situated a half mile beyond the Van Cortlandt Park terminus of the subway line running to Times Square and the theatre district of New York. This day school had a few boarding pupils, and they and I had rooms on the top floor of a large wooden building a few steps away from the new, one-story brick building in which classes were held and meals were taken.

We—my charges and I and the housekeeper and the resident nurse—had been through the terrible 'flu epidemic together. Our floor had become an infirmary, and an outside nurse had joined us. None of us had died, and I had not even come down with the disease. We were all well by November 7.

I remember nothing of that day except two hours in the afternoon, which I shall presently recall. I must have glanced at a morning newspaper—*The New York Times* probably—and learned from its headline that "*Germans Seeking Truce Reach Allied Lines.*" Everybody knew that the end of the war was near, and therefore the United Press announcement, made shortly after noon of November 7 that an armistice had been signed, was instantly believed.

At one p.m. a lone whistle blew high above Manhattan, then another, and another, and soon there was a tremendous chorus of whistles above the streets and on the waterways around the island. Newsboys, shouting "The war is ovah," hit the streets with "Extras." Out at Riverdale we heard the whistles faintly, and all afternoon there came to us a low roar from the great city to the south.

Riverdale Country Day School did not, however, break out in

celebration. The schedule of afternoon activities and evening study-period went calmly on. It was my turn to stay on the grounds, to supervise afternoon play, and to preside over study hall. I did not repine at being assigned to the school grounds, for I did not know until the next day what I was missing: not just a big celebration but the very greatest celebration in New York's history.

It was a halcyon day—calm, an intense blue sky, the pleasant temperature in the mid-fifties. I led my charges down the hill and into Van Cortlandt Park, and set them to playing soccer. Was young William Poole, whom I would meet years later in the publishing circles of New York, among the shrill, yelling players on that cloudless afternoon? I do not remember if it was his form (or grade) I was overseeing.

I went over to the northern side of the playing field and sat down, and there something took me by surprise. A state of joy came over me like no state of psychology I had felt before and like none since. For an hour or more I sat on a clump of grass, letting my charges play by themselves, while suffusion after suffusion of peace filled me. And that hour or two of what I have since called the enjoyment of a halcyon state of mind is all that I can remember of the day when the end of World War I was prematurely reported.

The next morning I read about what had happened below the Harlem River while I sat blissfully on a tussock in Van Cortlandt Park. I read how Fifth Avenue was closed to traffic while crowds surged up the roadway from curb to curb, and there was singing and cheering and much bussing by women of the men in uniform. Businesses closed, school children were sent home, impromptu parades started all over Manhattan. From the tall buildings a storm of ticker tape, confetti, streamers of paper towels, scraps of paper fluttered down; there was a record paperfall, 155 tons of paper, to be swept up the next day. The State Department issued denials of the United Press cable but the crowds refused to comprehend and went on celebrating. The lights went up on Broadway that evening, liquor was illegally served to men in uniform, and New Yorkers drank copiously to the end of the war and the piping times of peace.

The extraordinary thing about this greatest of all New York celebrations except the celebration of the true armistice four days

later was the absence of ugliness. "There ran an unwonted spirit of delicacy and tenderness," I read in the *N.Y. Tribune* on November 8. "There was none of the rowdiness associated with election and New Year's jubilations. No one was handled roughly." The *Tribune* reporter saw many eyes glistening with tears that afternoon, and a steady stream of thankful persons left the noise of Fifth Avenue to pray in St. Patrick's. On the East Side people called out "Sholem! Sholem!"

Shortly before all the whistles and sirens on ships and factories let out their high roar, a liberal journalist, Harold Stearns, had called on his publisher, Horace Liveright, to go to lunch. The roar broke out while they were on the street, and they saw Enrico Caruso come out on a small balcony at the Knickerbocker Hotel where he lived and throw roses down on the crowd. "As I myself remember it," Stearns wrote seventeen years later, "the expressions of even the dullest and most sordid people's faces really changed; countenances lighted up with new hope, new assurance. There was a new look in everybody's eyes. It was the dawn of a new world—and everybody knew it, whether they were articulate or reticent."

It is certain that on that day the makers or the expressers of the most characteristic moods of the literature of the coming decade were all exalted by the premature announcement of an armistice. Even T. S. Eliot in London must have felt that war's end was very near although his duties at Lloyd's Bank, Ltd., were not remitted because no false report of a "cease-fire" was spread in England. In only four years from this halcyon afternoon the young man on the tussock in Van Cortlandt Park would be reading Eliot's precipitation of a postwar mood of disillusion that would be named "the waste land mood."

In Greenwich Village a young woman from Maine had recently published a quatrain—"The First Fig"—that would become the most-quoted quatrain of the nineteen-twenties: "My candle burns at both ends." Edna St. Vincent Millay would be the symbol of the "flaming youth mood."

Even more representative of the oncoming young generation of writers and readers was Second Lieutenant F. Scott Fitzgerald who was now relieved of the prospect of overseas service (which he

craved). His infantry unit had been brought up from the South to Camp Mills on Long Island, and had actually been marched on to a transport and then marched off. He had already been writing about parties in the "jazz age mood."

In Italy a young Midwesterner, briefly apprenticed to newspaper work, was convalescing from wounds suffered while serving in the Italian infantry. A few years later Gertrude Stein was to say to him, "You are all a lost generation," and in a novel Ernest Hemingway would precipitate the "lost generation mood."

On this November seventh the happiest man in Baltimore—certainly the most relieved—could have been a 38-year-old bachelor, an editor of *The Smart Set*, Henry Louis Mencken, who had registered for the draft two months earlier and was glumly awaiting his call to fight in a war toward which he was skeptical and antipathetic. The nearness of conscription into the army had for once shaken the mood of the diverted spectator, the mood of hearty entertainment, which Mencken was to make popular in the Twenties.

Mencken's friend, Theodore Dreiser, was lumbering about Greenwich Village in these days. He did not know that his conflicts with Comstockery were over, and the mood of naturalism—agnostic, deterministic, scientific—in which he brooded over his novels was on its way to dominate many American writers.

Sinclair Lewis was thirty-three on this birthday of a new period; married, the father of a boy, he was a free lance writer who had not yet expressed the critical mood that would make him internationally famous—the mood of satire, the mood of "debunking," to use a crude word coined in the Twenties.

Last of the great expressers of the moods of the Twenties was Eugene O'Neill who on this joyous day seems to have been living soberly in New Jersey after visiting Greenwich Village to attend rehearsals of his one-act play, *Where the Cross Is Made*. Exempt from military service because of a tubercular history, O'Neill held violent anti-war sentiments. More than any other mood, he was expressing the mood of bohemia—before his second marriage he had been living in a little room above a saloon in Greenwich Village—but after he became a Broadway dramatist, his general mood might be characterized as psychoanalytic. It was not necessary to have a

profound understanding of psychoanalysis—and O'Neill never acquired such understanding—to express the general air, the circumambient mood, of the new schools of the "unconscious," and this O'Neill did. He disseminated the mood of psychoanalysis while insisting that he had read comparatively little of Freud, Jung and Adler.

Of these eight voices of the Twenties' moods, the young man of twenty-two whom we left on the sideline of a boys' soccer game, had read work of only three. He avidly read Mencken each month in *The Smart Set*; he had a slight acquaintance with Eliot in the *Little Review*; and he had read an O'Neill short story and had seen *Where the Cross Is Made* at the Provincetown Playhouse. Of Dreiser and Edna St. Vincent Millay he had heard but had not yet read their work. Of Sinclair Lewis, although Lewis had written popular novels, he had never heard; his eye had simply not noted the advertisements. Nor had he heard of Scott Fitzgerald or Ernest Hemingway for the simple reason that they had not yet made their debut before the general reading public.

Four days later came the true armistice. Mark Sullivan, a writer of contemporary history, caught the impressions of Kenneth Mayo, an American officer at the front. The Germans, Mayo said, made a demonstration, but in the American sector where he was, "when the noise of battle ceased there was a restful peace that passeth man's understanding or his ability to describe: there was no hilarity or jubilation."

What was this restful peace that passed this young officer's ability to describe? I believe that it was what I too, a civilian with weak eyes, felt that afternoon in Van Cortlandt Park—the feeling of youth restored, of rich possibilities regained. Consider what had been the black state of the young generation, the generation that was to set the tone of the Twenties. This generation had been coming of age with an exciting sense of potentiality. English thought and letters just before 1914 had been a-tingle with expectation of a new age. Despite the war in Europe, America seemed to be a seedbed for a national revival in the arts. America's entrance into the war was a sudden constriction of potentiality. Early in 1918 Scott Fitzgerald wrote from training camp to his cousin: . . . "it looks as

if the youth of me and my generation ends sometime during the present year, rather summarily—If we ever get back, and I don't particularly care, we'll be rather aged—in the worst way. . . . every man I've met who's been to war, that is this war, seems to have lost youth and faith in men. . . ."

But now on November 7, 1918, to be confirmed four days later, came the promise of a quick release from the awful threat to the possibilities of youth. The restrictions of war would soon be lifted, and the shadow of mass death would disappear. Vocations would open up, and the rotogravure sections of the Sunday newspapers would stop their "Died on the Field of Honor" gallery of photographs of the youthful casualties. Youth which was being crushed out was now being given back.

The wonderful times of peace were at hand, and the young generation in America looked to the future with a confidence that would be impossible to the generations that followed; the young generation that entered the depressed thirties, and the young generation that entered the armed forces in the early forties would not know this confidence.

There was hilarity, there was jubilation on the birthday of the Twenties, but beneath the celebrating, flooding the being of many young men and young women, was the sudden feeling that the opportunity to rebel and to fulfill themselves had indeed come.

In Rolfe Humphries' translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* we read that

. . . in the winter season,
For seven days of calm, Alcyone
Broods over her nest on the surface of the waters
While the sea-waves are quiet. Through this time
Aeolus keeps his winds at home, and ocean
Is smooth for his descendants' sake.

So it seemed on that afternoon of the seventh of November 1918, when the feeling of being at war was succeeded by the feeling of being at peace.

Ade—Who Needed None

LOWELL MATSON

ON A HOT NIGHT late in August, 1904, George Ade's *The College Widow* opened at the Columbia Theatre in Washington, D.C. For three weeks the play had been rehearsed in New York while Ade's newspaper friends and loyal fraternity brothers dropped in for a quick look and forecast dire results for the first American play with college and football as its central theme. Since most of Congress and the diplomatic corps were out of town, the house was only two-thirds full. When the curtain went up, the cast was discouraged, and Ade, already famous as a newspaperman, humorist, and librettist, paced nervously up and down the strip of carpet back of the parquet circle.

The first act, however, evoked chuckles; the second act was followed by prolonged applause; and the third act, set in a corner of a football stadium by the main entrance to the playing field (a forerunner of a more recent scene in *Damn Yankees*), with its action, cheering, and excitement brought the audience to its feet. Admiral Dewey, still the lion of American society as a result of Manila Bay and other chauvinistic exploits, stood up in his box and cried: "George, it's all right!"

The play was a hit in Washington, and a bigger hit in New York, where, of the season's plays, only Belasco's production of *The Music Master* had a longer run. The next season, three companies played *The College Widow* on the road from coast to coast, and the play grossed over \$2,000,000 before it was released to stock companies. An early movie version, with Dolores Costello and Thomas Meighan in the leads, was accompanied in London by a press agent's glossary to familiarize Britishers with American terms. Later movie versions were *The Widow from Chicago* and *Freshman Love*. Jerome Kern, Guy Bolton, and P. G. Wodehouse wrote a musical version, *Leave It to Jane*, in 1918 which Ade was always careful to disown, but which in a sparkling revival has been one of the off-Broadway hits of

1959-61. *The College Widow* originated that now hackneyed plot—which Ade insisted was the only workable one for a story about athletics—in which a player fights against odds, wins for his team, becomes a hero, and wins the girl. Most plays or scenarios on the college theme since, from *Brown of Harvard* to *The Poor Nut*, have used Ade's formula; otherwise, perhaps they would not seem to be college plays.

George Ade was born in Kentland, Indiana, in 1866. His father, a county official, wangled a scholarship for him at Purdue University, then a struggling young technical school. Ade did not particularly distinguish himself in college during his first two years since he was over fond of play. Frustrated by a myriad of courses in the sciences which he was forced to take, he almost transferred to the University of Indiana where he could major in literature. He finally joined a budding chapter of Sigma Chi, where two of his fraternity brothers were Booth Tarkington and John T. McCutcheon, the latter to become famous as the Pulitzer Prize winning dean of American cartoonists. Tarkington did succumb to the literary lures of the University at Bloomington, but Ade, now that he had close companionship in his undergraduate nocturnal tom-cattling, stuck it out. Those fond days started a life-long love affair with Sigma Chi and later in life he became national president of the fraternity and one of its most highly honored sons.

After graduating in 1887, he went to work for a newspaper in Lafayette, Indiana, as a reporter and jack-of-all-trades at \$6 a week. When the newspaper folded—and Ade always insisted it was due to managerial deficiencies rather than his lack of reportorial prowess—he accepted a position with a patent medicine firm for which he wrote (while furiously puffing on Sweet Caporals) testimonials advertising a tobacco-habit cure which was guaranteed to cure the most persistent user if he followed directions. The first direction was to stop using tobacco and then take the tablets. It was during this period that for the same employer he became dubiously, and perhaps apocryphally, famous for inventing the slogan "It works While You Sleep" to promote the laxative Cascarets.

It was a stroke of good fortune being released from these huck-

stering chores. The brawny city of Chicago beckoned to him just about the time it was beginning to become a mecca for ambitious literary types from all over mid-America. John McCutcheon, his Sigma Chi brother, was in Chicago seeking his fortune and he bade Ade join him. McCutcheon was starting his career on the *Chicago Morning News*, later the *Record*, as an illustrator, and Ade was given a tyro's position writing the weather at the munificent salary of \$12 a week.

One night when Ade was alone in the office the steamer *Tioga* blew up in the Chicago River with a great loss of life. In despair the editor had to send the cub weather reporter to cover one of the biggest stories of the year. His account was so brilliantly written that overnight he became *not* a full-fledged reporter, but *the* star reporter of the paper. He was soon assigned to cover such events of nationwide interest as the Homestead strike and the Sullivan-Corbett prize fight, when the seemingly invincible John L. was dethroned.

Ade and McCutcheon, roommates in a hall bedroom without bath or closet, were men-about-town, reveling in the varied delights of bustling Chicago in the gay nineties. Ade covered the Columbia Exposition in 1893, about which he wrote special human interest stories. Faced with the prospect of irregular assignments after the fair closed, he started his famous two-column feature, "Stories of the Streets and Town," on the editorial page of the *Record*. These columns, terse daily gems of 1500 to 2000 words, were to form the matrix of Ade's career. They reflected keen observation of character, economy of words, and a flair for the dramatic, and climactic moral or tag line. In less than a year a selected number of his columns appeared in book form.

He was still in his twenties and the juices of life flowed strong in him as he savored the high and low life of the sprawling, brisk mid-Western metropolis. On the surface he did not appear to be a wide-eyed country boy from back home in Indiana, but the inner Ade was a perceptive sponge of controlled naïveté which soaked up the variegated scenes and people of the city. He found stories everywhere—by looking out the office window at a new brick and steel structure rising story by story to block out further view, by talking to the touts, the bootblacks, the push-cart peddlers, the worn

immigrant women, the rouged girls of the nightly brass bedstead, the drummers with their straw hats and carpet bags, the captains of industry, the brawlers, and the Babbitts. But especially he was intrigued by the breezy young men out to make their fortunes, those whose brash confidence and limitless energy, despite lack of literacy, assured them of a modicum of success whether in the mushrooming ranks of office workers, making book in back rooms along State Street, or trying to make Bertha the sewing machine girl and Suzie the stenographer.

He was especially intrigued by the new lingo, the new slang of the city which was giving staid English a shot in the arm and baffling conservatives. He found it colorful, expressive, pithy, and enriching. He had an ear for it and he used it. Damon Runyon's use of Broadwayese decades later sprang directly from Ade's pioneering in the use of spontaneous language. Runyon's promulgation was of a very specialized jargon which never had the nationwide impact of Ade's, and was never as totally American in character. For a working writer, rather than a linguist, Ade's depiction in dialogue and story of the volatility of colloquial usage was remarkable.

While the formidable Eugene Field, balancing pince-nez on nose, scratched out his column with a stained metal pen in an adjoining room, Ade daily dashed off with a soft pencil on yellow foolscap his stories of the streets and town in a clear but sprawling hand. He used pencil rather than the relatively new typewriter because he had to see every sentence as it went down or he couldn't believe it was there. McCutcheon would often illustrate the stories with exquisite pen and ink drawings, an artistic collaboration and editorial page attraction long since disappeared in this day of the teletype and "canned" press services. Chicagoans would turn avidly to Ade's daily column, delightedly chuckling over what he had come up with that day, and then later would go on to Mr. Field's erudite content in a neighboring column.

Ade tried to quit the newspaper to go on a trip to Europe, but his editor signed him on as a travelling reporter for two articles a week, printed as "What a Man Sees Who Goes Away From Home," and later collected under the title, *In Pastures New*. On his return his columns and books continued and he soon became one of the

best known literary figures in America. Such classics as *Artie*, concerning a brash young man-about-town who speaks in slang, and *Pink Marsh*, about an irrepressible bootblack in a barbershop who comments on everything from politics to gambling to women, appeared. William Dean Howells, long-time dean of American critics, ranked Ade second only to Mark Twain as America's greatest humorist; Mark Twain himself commented that Ade's *Pink Marsh* deserved to live forever. Twain, on rereading the writings of the junior humorist, said: "How effortless is the limning! it is as if the work did itself, without the help of [a] master's hand."

Ade in trying to maintain the fresh quality of his column often experimented with different literary forms. It occurred to him to try a fable in the archaic form of Aesop, and to write it in the vernacular with no attempt at journalistic dignity. On September 17, 1897 his first fable of this kind appeared in the *Record* entitled, "The Fable of Sister Mae, Who Did As Well As Could Be Expected," which started out:

Two sisters lived in Chicago, the Home of Opportunity.

Luella was a Good Girl, who had taken Prizes at the Mission Sunday School, but she was Plain, much. Her Features did not seem to know the value of Team Work. Her Clothes fit her Intermittently, as it were. She was what would be called a Lumpy Dresser. But she had a good Heart.

The other Sister was Different.

She began as Mary, then changed to Marie, and her Finish was Mae.

From earliest Youth she had lacked Industry and Application.

She was short on Intellect but long on Shape.

The column won immediate favor but George must have been ashamed of his deviation from normal English because it was a year before he wrote another column in the form, and then he was careful to head it: "A Fable in Slang"—as if to inform his reader that he was having fun and really knew better. After that he wrote every Saturday's column in fable form in slang. And in 1900 the first of his many collections of *Fables in Slang* was published and George was on his way to national and international fame as a humorist and specialist in slang. Actually there was little slang in his fables but what there was, was telling. What made them so popular was his shrewd observations of people and life, a kind of native realism,

which unlike the dreary, heavy-handed imported variety was written with a light, kind touch. His influence in vivifying the language and in liberalizing writing is inestimable.

There are some oldtimers today who relish the memory of such Ade fables as "The Fable of the New York Person Who Gave Stage Fright to Fostoria, Ohio," which ends with the moral: *A New York man never begins to Cut Ice until he is west of Rahway*; or "The Fable of the Copper and the Jovial Undergrads," which ends with the moral: *Always select the Right Sort of Parents before you start to be Rough*; or "The Fable of the Adult Girl Who Got Busy Before They Could Ring the Bell on Her," which ends: *As soon as he begins to Frequent the Back Rooms of the House, measure him for the Harness*. William Allen White wrote Ade a letter in 1899 in which the Emporia gazeteer declared, "I would rather have written 'Pink Marsh' than be President, or 'Fables in Slang' than be right."

Of all writers in the continuum of English and American letters it was George Ade who most made recently-invented language (slang) respectable; and he did it almost overnight, no mean feat in a society rigidly conditioned by language purists and the awkward pretensions of Lew Wallace and the ponderosity of Gibbon.

No critic was a greater admirer of Ade than Howells, whose incisive analysis of Ade is critically definitive:

His humor is not only a far advance upon the earlier Western humor in material, but it is a reversion to still earlier humor of the East in refinement of form. His joke is not the huge joke of the frontier, with its heroic outlaw, the magnanimous desperado, the self-sacrificing gambler, and their women-kind, and whatever was grotesque in the struggle of outlawry with order. These had already lapsed through time, if not through taste. To the romantic magazinists and their readers, the prey of Mr. Ade's keen wit is the eternal snob, man, woman, and girl (rather especially girl), and he seizes them in their infinite variety as he finds them in a metropolis striving for alien worldliness with the persistent consciousness of its heart, of the farm, the village, the country town where it was native. He visits these origins with the same unsparing vision and poses their types against the background of our kind American commonness with a sense of the reason of things, pervasive almost to compassion. His portrayal of life is almost absolute in its perfection . . . If his talent too easily contents itself with perfection in the things which cannot be his greatest things, still it is a talent unrivalled in its sort . . .

That ebullient fabler of our times, James Thurber, writes in his

preface to *My Life and Hard Times*:

Your short-piece writer's time is not Walter Lippman's time, or Stuart Chase's time, or Professor Einstein's time. It is his own personal time, circumscribed by the short boundaries of his pain and embarrassment, in which what happens to his digestion, the rear axle of his car, and the confused flow of his relationships with six or eight persons and two or three buildings is of greater importance than what goes on in the universe.

The above none the less, Thurber and Ade are truly fablers of *their times*, unlimited in vision, because Thurber's and Ade's fables are painfully accurate reflections of their two periods, and of lasting interest for their intrinsically universal and continuing truths. While it could be said that Thurber's humor is contemporaneously more cutting and satirical than Ade's, it should be remembered that Ade wrote his fables from the innocence of the turn of the century before the Marne and Bealleau Wood, while Thurber writes from the explosive complexity of the mid-twentieth century. Realizing this, it is remarkable that Ade's work (although understandably gentler than Thurber's) still seems fresh and biting. Thus will Thurber's likely seem in the year 2000.

James Thurber recently wrote this author: "I haven't read anything of George Ade's for more than forty years, I guess. I read the fables and liked most of them, but they had no effect on mine, which are not in the slang tradition. I wouldn't put him in the tradition of the classic fable writers, most of whom belong to Greece and Rome and India a thousand or two thousand years before anybody ever heard of the new Richard Nixon or the old one. I was more interested in rereading Horace's fable of 'The City Mouse and the Country Mouse' than in looking up Ade . . ."

But Ade, admittedly, was loosely influenced by Aesop, as was Thurber by Horace. Thurber, the new New Yorker transplanted from Ohio, and Ade, the new Chicagoan transplanted from Indiana, both semi-consciously found a useful format in the heritage left by the ancient story-spinners, and both recast it to fit their own personalities. While one has tellingly used literate whimsy, and while the other used the smart urban hipster-like talk of his day, both in their fables become successful social commentators because of their innate propensity to reform through constructive ridicule.

Mr. R. H. Russell, the leading Eastern syndicate manager, approached Ade with a lucrative offer to syndicate his fables nationwide. Ade reluctantly left his active newspaper days behind in 1900. Thereafter, the *Record*, only one of more than a hundred papers carrying the fables, paid as much for a single one as it had been paying Ade for a whole week's work.

His early retirement was prompted not only by the fact that he was tired, but also by the material fact that he knew he had only so many words in him and he intended to use them to the best material advantage. He was a newspaperman who had made good for he fulfilled the latent dream of all the grubbers from copy boy to editor: tall, handsome, aquiline of feature, and sartorially elegant, he was a household word; he was published between hard covers; he was syndicated; he could dictate his own hours; he was lionized; he was travelled; and he was rolling in royalties. It couldn't have happened to a nicer guy; and if it had to happen to anyone it was wonderful that it happened to a newspaperman. If he remained a newspaperman among newspapermen, he was also their darling, because he was damned good copy. Everybody began to know who George Ade was. If Ade bought a new runabout he would be featured scuttling along the loop in a four column photograph on the society page of the *Record*. A new book would inspire McCutcheon or some other cartoonist to satirize Ade's success and wealth immediately. He became to most of his early fellow workers, and to the next generation of newspapermen, the embodiment of what was Ade's own favorite label and epitaph for a friend: "a lovable character."

After Ade resigned from the *Record*, he went to the Philippines to join McCutcheon and other newspaper friends who as correspondents had covered the Spanish-American War. From the Sulu archipelago they had brought back to Manila fascinating stories about the Sultan, one Hadjii Jamalol Kiram, and his domain. Upon returning to the United States in 1901, he accompanied McCutcheon to Asheville, North Carolina, where McCutcheon recuperated from a mysterious tropical illness contracted in the Philippines. In three months, to pass the time, Ade completed the book of a musical comedy based upon the Sultan. Back in Chicago, he commissioned a

young British composer, Alfred G. Wathall, to write the music. Henry W. Savage heard of the project, and persuaded Ade and Wathall to agree to a professional production under his aegis. *The Sultan of Sulu* first opened at the Studebaker Theatre in Chicago on March 11, 1902, and in New York at Wallack's Theatre, on December 30, the same year, with Frank Moulon in the role of the Sultan. In this comic opera Ade introduced the phrase, "The Constitution and the Cocktail follow the flag," and also, "It is no time for mirth and laughter, the cold, gray dawn of the morning after." The absurdities concerning American military attempts to Americanize the natives in *The Sultan of Sulu* provided much the same kind of humorous satire after the Spanish-American War as those in *Teahouse of the August Moon* did after World War II.

The late Oscar Hammerstein II was justly proud of his liberal theme and lyrics in the libretto of *South Pacific*, but forty years before Ade was doing much the same thing in his lyrics with a touch more satirical, more politically oriented. Critics and musicologists have ranked *The Sultan of Sulu* as the only American operetta to equal the best of Gilbert and Sullivan. In it a chorus of American soldiers sang to the natives a song called "Benevolent Assimilation":

We want to assimilate, if we can,
Our brother who is brown;
We love our dusky fellow-man
And we hate to hunt him down.
So when we perforate his frame,
We want him to be good.
We shoot at him to make him tame,
If he but understood.

In that day long before liberal insight into the American Negro was fashionable, Ade was writing minor masterpieces about the Negro notable for their sympathy. The description of William Pinckney Marsh, his boot-black hero in *Pink Marsh*, goes: "He saw things from his own standpoint, and there was room for no one else on his pedestal . . . It will never be known whether Pink was a tired mortal driven to work, or an industrious mortal who had to restrain himself by certain affectations . . . The humility which he made his stock in trade was merely an outward pretense." And in 1910 he wrote

lyrics for *The City Chap* for a group of Negroes to sing:

The 'Publican Party—the Democratic,
 An' the daily papers, too,
 Have asked in a manneh most emphatic
 What the cullud race will *do*.
 Will the Aff'o-American population
 Keep growing at such a rate
 That by and by they'll rule the nation
 An' control most ev'ry state?
 The statesmen up in Washington
 This problem soon must face;
 It seems to worry ev'ry one
Excep' the cullud race.

In 1903 Ade wrote the book and lyrics to another comic opera, *Peggy from Paris*, also produced by Savage at Wallack's. While this second venture into the musical comedy field did little to improve upon the great promise of his first, it at least repeated that promise. Its comic story about a Mid-western girl who returns to America after several years of studying voice in Paris and poses as a French diva, reminiscent as it was of Fitch's *Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines*, captivated audiences.

That same year, 1903, Ade essayed his first straight play in order to get away from depending on tunes and comics and dancing numbers. He particularly wanted to get away from slang and the slick lingo of the cities, the picturesque speech with which he had become identified in his fables. He chose the environment of a small Mid-western community in the eighteen eighties, and a plot connected with neighborhood factions and political feuds. The play was entitled *The County Chairman*. *The New York Times'* reviewer wrote, after its opening at Wallack's on November 24, 1903: "The County Chairman' is not only one of the few really entertaining pieces of a generally disastrous season; it heralds the advent of a notable recruit to the thin and scattered ranks of American playwrights." The play found favor with a generation which was largely country-born and could remember the eighties, and for years it was successfully toured.

Not yet out of his thirties, George Ade was syndicated and the

author of several books; and he already had had three successful productions on the boards. He still lived in Chicago, sent royalty checks home for his brother to invest in land, and journeyed to New York only for rehearsals and opening nights. He built an Elizabethan style mansion on his Indiana property, which he called "Hazelden," a home of grand proportions for a bachelor. Not content with lush farm operations and orchards, he added a swimming pool and a private golf course.

In 1904 he moved to his estate and began an avocation as a country squire. Three weeks after arriving at Hazelden, he completed *The College Widow*, his second straight play, taking neighboring Wabash College as the prototype for the freshwater college he called "Atwater" in the play. Crude as it is, *The College Widow* was an artistic advance over his previous work.

Three weeks after *The College Widow* opened at the Garden Theatre in New York, Ade's *The ShoGun*, with music by Gustave Luders, who was to compose the music for all of his succeeding musicals, opened at Wallack's. This was another Gilbertian comic opera, but this time set in Korea, where Ade had spent some time as a tourist.

George worked hard on his articles, books, librettos, what have you. He was an editor's delight, for more often than not his product would be in perfectly acceptable shape; however he would revise and alter, even though grudgingly, to conform to an editor's preferences. If an editor or producer became too demanding he would quietly tell him to go to hell. At one time Savage, the producer of his early light operas, kept hounding Ade for more songs for *The ShoGun*. George, his back up, wrote a song to end all songs, "The Microbe's Serenade," filling it with words he knew the chorus couldn't learn, let alone pronounce, like: bacteroidal, animalculae, protoplasm, microscopical, metamorphic, embryonic, diatom, epithelium, rhizopodical, and primordial. Needless to say, the song wasn't used and the matter was dropped.

On September 12, 1905, Ade's next comedy, *The Bad Samaritan*, opened at the Garden Theatre and failed miserably. Ade broke with his difficult and mercenary producer, Henry W. Savage, and Charles Frohman, on September 27, 1905, presented his next play, *Just Out*

of *College*, at the Lyceum Theatre.

Charles Dillingham produced his following play, *Artie*, at the Garrick Theatre in 1907. This was an undistinguished comedy which included Frank Craven and William Harrigan in the cast. Charles Frohman presented his next play at the Empire Theatre in 1908, *Father and the Boys*, which provided a lucrative vehicle for three years for William H. Crane, who was already famous for his portrayal of David Harum, and who as Lemuel Morewood, the father in *Father and the Boys*, keeps two steps ahead of his sons in romance. By this time, Ade, inured to success or failure, did not even bother leaving Indiana, or wherever he happened to be, in order to attend his New York openings.

Early in 1909 Dillingham presented his next musical comedy, *The Fair Co-ed*, at the Knickerbocker Theatre. The musical was a personal triumph for Elsie Janis in the title role. On January 11, 1910, Dillingham opened his new theatre, the Globe, now the elegant Lunt-Fontanne Theatre, with Ade's last musical, *The Old Town*, which starred David Montgomery and Fred Stone.

He had immortalized grass-roots politics in his first play, *The County Chairman*, based upon the first-hand experience of having had a father who was a county political figure, and of a youth of witnessing the colorful machinations in politics on the local level. Indiana was called politically a "pivotal" state and he claimed it "began to pivot early in the spring of each presidential year and kept on pivoting until snowfall." His devastating, modern attacks on politicians can be exemplified by this verse from *The ShoGun*:

Though politics may loudly buzz
Each candidate has vowed
To seldom think, and if he does,
To never think out loud.
He simply sits in solemn state
And let's his friends explain
That he's the only candidate
Who's truly safe and sane.
He has a very deep regard
For ev'ry son of toil.
And yet he would not be too hard
On friends of Standard Oil.

Ade penned a few really memorable one-act plays. Perhaps his finest was *Marse Covington*, which is a touching piece about the relationship between an impoverished Southern aristocrat and his former Negro servant. A notable performance of *Marse Covington* opened the New Theatre in Chicago on October 8, 1906. In the play he touched a deeper note in characterization than he ever achieved in his longer dramatic works. *Nettie*, a playlet about a gold-digging young woman who never actually appears on stage, was introduced on the same bill as Beulah Marie Dix's expressionistic and pacifistic *Across the Border* at the Princess Theatre in 1914. *Nettie* is almost Schnitzler-like in its sophistication, and was considered by some to be the best play of the 1914 season regardless of its shortness. *The New York Times* thought well enough of it to publish the complete text on page one of its drama section. *The Mayor and the Manicure* is another of his clever one-acts. Written in broad comedy strokes, it has been popular with amateur groups for decades, and is still performed on radio and television.

Ade retired from active writing for the stage in 1910. In spite of his talent for creating comic situations and for depicting character, and his genius in writing vernacular, he never really mastered the technical intricacies of play construction, perhaps because he wrote so rapidly and prolifically. He had spent ten useful and productive years in newspaper work, and ten profitable, meteoric years in the theatre.

In the years before World War I several of his plays were made into silent films. Dozens of his fables were made into shorts, under his supervision, by the old Essanay Film Manufacturing Company. These instigated his long-standing hassle with Hollywood when he complained about "hack" scenarists who did nothing except "botch things up and not earn their money." In the twenties and thirties he wrote several original scenarios, both silent and talking, including *Our Leading Citizen*, *Back Home and Broke*, and *Woman Proof*, all for Thomas Meighan, who had been cast for his first acting role in the Chicago stage company of *The College Widow* as Billy Bolton, the football hero. He also wrote two appealing pictures for Will Rogers, *U.S. Minister Bedlow* and a screen version of *The County*

Chairman. But he never got along with Hollywood moguls. On more than one occasion he forbade Hollywood to use his name in connection with a picture he had no wish to claim. Ade once wrote the late producer Jesse L. Lasky: "When you said that drastic changes would be made in the script, you did not overstate the case. I discovered several commas which might have been in the original text."

Ade's pictures of the American tourist abroad were devastating: "When we get away from home we violate all the rules governing our everyday conduct. Our habits are no good to us unless we have the accustomed tools. . . . When we go moving about by the thousands and hundreds of thousands, we certainly do provide entertainment for the sidelines. . . . We see Presbyterian matrons, who will not attend the movies back home, calmly sizing up the wicked antics of a Moulin Rouge, and never a flutter. We must not conclude that travellers leave their morals at home. They are simply playing the game from all angles, and sightseeing covers a multitude of irregularities."

Americans so recently abashed by *The Ugly American* cannot have remembered George Ade's comments or articles on the subject as far back as 1906. In his debunking, satirical "Story of an American Consul" he pled tongue-in-cheek: "Let us send out Consuls who can put up a 'front.' Have each Consul wear the uniform of a drum major. Make sure he can dance all night, play bridge, and keep up with the naval crowd when it comes to drinking. Make sure that he is averse to all forms of labour. Such a Consul will shed glory upon our beloved country." But, again, George's social comment was ironical and cerebrally pitched to titillate the intellect, not to shock into reform. He preferred reformation by ridicule rather than rule.

His plays by the mid-twenties were old-fashioned and nearly forgotten in a new theatre where psychology and sex, instead of family humor, were popular, and he resigned himself cheerfully to being an out-moded has-been. Occasionally, needing some ready cash, he would succumb to the pleadings of an editor and write an article for a magazine, or else a story for Hollywood. As he became an elder, prominent modern journalists such as O. O. McIntyre, Ring Lardner, and Damon Runyon wrote syndicated birthday columns in his honor. Franklin P. Adams always addressed him as "Father."

Between trips, he built a new chapter house for his old fraternity at Purdue, and wrote voluminous letters to undergraduates advising them on how to stage their college shows. He was an inveterate spectator at football games, and other sporting events, invariably accompanied by a surreptitious bottle. During the days of Prohibition he inveigled against the Drys, preferring friends who were Wets. Although surprisingly modest, notwithstanding his fame and fortune, or hob-nobbing with Presidents, or his many honors, Ade was inordinately proud that, under an alphabetical arrangement, his name was first on the list of those selected to direct the efforts of the Association for the Repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment. He remained a bachelor, waited on by a chauffeur and a housekeeper, a state he particularly relished, and one which he defended in *Single Blessedness and Other Observations*.

Ade had a lot to say on the joys and drawbacks of bachelorhood: "The bachelor is held up to contempt because he has evaded the draft. He is a slacker. He has side-stepped a plain duty . . . he is fifty per cent joke and fifty per cent object of pity. . . . He is led to believe that babies mistrust him. Young wives begin to warn their husbands when his name is mentioned. He is a chicken hawk in a world that was intended for turtle doves." And then George clinched the defense of his own bachelorhood with: "Possibly I am a coward, but I refuse to admit that all these other birds are heroes. . . . Is it generally known that bachelors privately receive encouragement and approbation from married men?"

In spite of the fact he was a college man to the end, he had little illusion about the undergraduate, "a confusing combination of slick-haired Apollo and spoon-fed infant" with "vast reservoirs filled with special information which would mean nothing to a person more than twenty-four years of age . . . alternating with these crowded compartments are roomy, open spaces which are approximately vacuums." But Hazelden often played host to the Sigma Chis, and after football games on Saturdays into the dying embers of evening George would sit in his old age at a corner table in an old hotel on the banks of the Wabash, his white thatched head nodding in the collegiate babel, matching youth drink for drink while they rehashed the game.

Evaluation today of Ade's literary comet, of his solid contributions to American humor and literary styles, is blurred because two generations have now completely passed him by. He is suspect as a forgotten literary fad. Although critical rediscovery is primarily concerned with other Americans, he was an author about whom H. L. Mencken wrote: "Ade achieves what O. Henry, with all his ingenuity, fails to achieve: He fills his bizarre tales with human beings"; and about whom William Dean Howells opined: "In Mr. George Ade the American spirit arrives . . . there it is, with its hat pushed back, its hands in its pockets, and at its outstretched feet that whole, vast, droll American world, essentially alike in Maine and Oregon and all the regions between—speaking one slang, living one life, meaning one thing."

When Ade died in 1944 there were still newspapermen around who revered his name, and their eulogies were read at his Indiana graveside. High tribute had been paid to him by nearly every leading critic of his times. Mencken wrote that he was a peasant touched by divine fire who somehow got himself born in Indiana. Carl Van Doren considered him perhaps the greatest of all newspaper columnists, and Booth Tarkington, his fellow Hoosier, believed it significant of his character that nobody in the world wondered why his neighbors named a town for him. By this time his plays had fallen into the American dramatic limbo, and his important writing had become mostly the specialty of avid collectors of Adeana. Yet, uniquely, today's undergraduates at his alma mater see football games in a stadium built partly with funds earned as royalties from his writing. It is probably the only football stadium in the world named for an author.

Social Role and Dramatic Conflict

H. R. HAYS

ALTHOUGH LITERARY CRITICISM has profited from the study of psychology ever since the latter science has begun to be widely applied to human problems, it has been slow to make use of insights from the nearby fields of anthropology and sociology. It is true that Frazer's *Golden Bough* stimulated a perhaps too enthusiastic attempt to interpret the heroes of classical literature as fertility kings and to treat tragedy in general as a survival in symbolical form of a bloody nature rite. The vogue for pursuing origins has now passed, however, and sociological thinking is beginning to explore other concepts which should eventually modify our picture of man and his works.

As I see it, this thinking is particularly pertinent to dramatic literature. In the latter field there have been few attempts at a fresh analytical approach since the vogue for Marxist criticism in the thirties. The latter trend resulted in a rather mechanical search for class motivation and stuck fast in the dogmas of economic determinism. Now truly dramatic writing always possesses structure and this structure is based on human relationships. If we discard the Marxist class viewpoint as too narrow a method of looking at these relationships, perhaps modern sociology can provide a fulcrum for our lever.

We begin, as usual, with action. Although some novelists, such as Joyce, have gone far in the direction of an intricate narcissism, on the whole both the play and the novel refuse to give up dramatic action. And dramatic action always involves people in contact with each other, battling with the problems of living together. Dramatic action may either consciously reflect ideas and group concepts or it may be content to symbolize them indirectly in emotional relationships between as few as two people.

Since drama is action of some sort we are led to a social thinker whose point of view is close to that of the playwright, a theorist

consciously concerned with action. Talcott Parsons, author of *The Structure of Social Action* (1937) and editor of a collection of essays, *Toward a General Theory of Action* (1952), has attempted to unify the social sciences. He believes that his theory can provide a meeting ground for economics, history, anthropology, and psychology. I think it is worth while to investigate his ideas in the hope of relating them to dramatic literature.

A student of Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, and Freud, Parsons came to the conclusion that there was a meeting ground between Durkheim and Freud. Durkheim was the first modern thinker to insist that there were social facts which were somehow different in quality from individual facts. This led him to a too wholesale dismissal of psychology. He was obsessed with the impersonal compulsions which forced individuals in groups to obey cultural regulations. This impersonal compulsion came, for him, to have an almost mystical significance. He named it the collective conscience (conscience he used in both the sense of consciousness and conscience). He used it to explain the phenomenon of religion.

Parsons subjected Durkheim's idea to a more rigorous analytical scrutiny and came to the conclusion that there was nothing mystical about the group conscience. Durkheim's social facts were relationships. For Parsons, the core of the philosophical problem was the fact that, before Durkheim, Christian individualism and its practical concomitant, utilitarianism, was unable to view the individual as anything but an isolated entity pursuing (with only biological hindrances) a selfish goal. The traditional religious point of view could not conceive of the interaction between individual goals. Even the medieval synthesis with its complicated dialectics was built upon the supremacy of the individual soul and the Catholic conception of morality *still* rests upon the egocentric notion of individual salvation *not* upon ethical reciprocity in social relationships.

For Parsons every individual starts out with a series of need dispositions (appetites, emotional drives, etc.) which, in the social relationship, are bound to conflict in some areas with those of other individuals. In order for society to exist without anarchic conflict, some of these goals must be renounced, postponed, or modified. The mediator between the anarchic goals of individuals is the col-

lective conscience of Durkheim, that mysterious force which makes men conform for their own good. Now this collective conscience, according to Parsons, is actually a series of *normative rules* set up by society. Culture is the rule book in which they are written down. How does this normative force of collective conscience work? Here Freud throws light on the problem. Freud, in his later years, developed the concept of the super-ego. According to psychoanalysis it is a built-in, unconscious code of conduct, created, on the one hand, by identification with the parent (and it should be remembered that God is the father in psychoanalytical terms), and supplemented on the other by imitation or learning.

The collective conscience is therefore internalized in the form of the super-ego. And it is through the family and the educational system that society passes on the collective conscience.

Although in childhood the individual's need dispositions are organized into emotional patterns by which he can fit into society, his whole personality is not absorbed by society. A part of him is free to dissent within limits. In situations he is forced to exercise choice. The most serious choice he will have to make is between trying to satisfy his need dispositions and inhibiting them. Hunger, for instance, can only be inhibited for a limited time. Sex needs, however, or the need for approbation, can and are greatly modified by society. The need dispositions are always strong enough to drive the individual toward some sort of action.

An act implies an actor, a situation, and a goal. The situation has elements which the actor can control and some which he can not. He must find some way of judging the situation. He must adjust to the conflicting need dispositions of the other individual or individuals involved. How does society clarify the issues?

Said Parsons, by the concept of *role*.

A role is a social badge with an accompanying type of behavior. The nouns father, judge, taxi-driver all denote roles. By definition we can expect a certain type of behavior as these roles are played. So it is that the individual gives over a certain part of his personality to his social role or roles and conforms more or less to the normative rules which apply.

Legal judgements are supposedly made *solely* on the basis of

role. When they do take some of the non-conforming personality into consideration, such phrases as "extenuating circumstances" are used. An institution such as the army operates in the same way. Institutions are therefore systems of roles.

Personal relationships are more complicated. They are based on contacts which often include several roles. A man and a woman may be involved as lovers and also as employer and employee. A father, if he undertakes to teach his child some skill, becomes involved with the child in the two roles of father and teacher. The unpredictable area of personality which does not conform to the role also has to be taken into account. In our daily dealings with each other we can not be as cut and dried as the legal profession or the army.

Action in situations involving personal relationships takes place on the basis of expectation of reactions. As has been pointed out, the personality never conforms completely to the role. Also the several roles one individual must play often conflict. Thus in personal relations accurate judgements occur only within limits and behavior has to be revised continually from one situation to another as new perceptions and adjustments take place. It can easily be seen that failure of perception or egotistic indifference can cause much conflict.

All these role relationships, both personal and institutional, are organized by society into a symbolic cultural pattern. These symbols are emotional signals which stimulate the individual toward role acceptance. For example, when the flag is run up or the national anthem played, the super-egos of all present respond with a loyal quickening of the pulse.

Let us see how Parsons' concepts apply to a specific drama. The *Antigone* of Sophocles will do nicely. From the opening lines the concept of role comes to the fore. Eteocles is to be buried with military honors for he has fulfilled his role of general defending Thebes. He has obeyed the collective conscience of the city, his social group. His brother, Polyneikes, has attempted to reach a personal goal and has attacked his own city. Therefore Creon, as an embodiment of its social conscience, has decreed sanctions against him even after death, refusing him religious burial. Antigone finds herself immediately in conflict in this situation. She feels more strongly her roles

as a sister and as a pious religionist. Her acceptance of these roles forces her to choose a different course of action than conformity to Creon's proclamation. In her opening dialog with Ismene we perceive at once the effect of different personalities in a situation. Antigone's expectation is that Ismene will also accept the roles of sister and religionist. Antigone's personality is brave and loyal. But Ismene is weaker and more conformist. She says "We are only women, we can not fight with men." Thus she puts forward another role in order to justify her own faint-heartedness. As a result, Antigone's relationship to her sister changes, by the end of the scene she is regarding her in a new light for she says, "I shall soon be hating you." Creon, upon his entrance, immediately states his conscious acceptance of his role as a personification of the collective conscience. "I have nothing but contempt for the governor who is afraid, for whatever reason, to follow the course that he knows is best for the state." He therefore sets out to be entirely legalistic in his approach. The messenger comes on in conflict with himself; he is afraid to accept his role as messenger because his news is bad. Ideally he should have nothing to fear but he knows something about Creon's personality apart from his role as impartial executive. He knows that Creon as an individual is prone to anger and may jump to the wrong conclusions. And indeed Creon does jump to conclusions. In his role as head of the state, the thing he fears and hates most is anarchy and consequently he goes into a tirade against rebels. Creon's experience as an individual enters into the picture for he has just lived through a disastrous attack upon the state. The sentry's worst fears are justified. Since Creon threatens him with death if he does not discover the criminal who has scattered earth upon Polynceikes' body, he decides to run away. But a few minutes later the messenger has revised his course of action. He has caught Antigone and now expects to be safe.

In the exchange which occurs between Antigone and Creon, they oppose the two roles of head of the state and pious religionist but it is interesting to note how the element of personality is intertwined. Creon accuses Antigone of inheriting obstinacy from her father whom he clearly did not like and finally puts forward a specious role argument, saying "Who is the man here?", implying

that Antigone has stepped out of her proper role of woman. Antigone, in her turn, accuses him of abusing his role in order to gratify his personal passions, "Ah, the good fortune of kings, licensed to do and say whatever they please!"

When Ismene is brought on again, we see that hers is a changeable personality. The discovery that Antigone is to suffer stiffens her courage. She revises her course of action and accepts the roles her sister had previously offered her, insisting she is willing to die with Antigone. She does, however, bring up one more argument involving a social role. She points out that Antigone is Creon's son's bride. Creon refuses to accept Antigone in that role any longer. In his scene with his son, Haimon, he forces the latter into a conflict between his role as Antigone's bridegroom and his roles as Creon's son and loyal citizen. Haimon tries to convince Creon that the latter has mistaken his own role. As head of the state, he embodies not only abstract justice but also the religious point of view. The collective conscience has been inclining toward the latter. Haimon feels that his father has been misled by his own obstinacy: his personal need dispositions have taken over. This leads to an open break between them in which need dispositions of both clash sharply and all social values become secondary. Tiresias, in a later scene, tells Creon, "You are sick, you are deathly sick." And indeed his tragic obstinacy is a kind of social sickness. We are convinced by now that he is misinterpreting his role as collective conscience and that he has become a tyrant. The advice sinks in. Tiresias penetrates Creon's egotism. The latter, at the last minute, tries to revise his course of action but it is too late. Antigone, Haimon, and even Creon's wife have died as a result of his error.

The foregoing illustrates the fact that the concept of role covers all aspects of dramatic conflict. It is possible to list them.

The simplest form is the naked opposition of need dispositions. When the restraining conditioning of social norms is removed, this takes place. In isolation this type of conflict is without a great deal of meaning or interest. Hence primitive struggles for survival, à la Jack London, do not rate very high as literature.

Far more interesting is the conflict between personal needs and the acceptance of role. In Creon's case we have a simple but forceful

study of the devices by which a man denies that such a conflict exists. Probably most rationalization springs from just this source. Examples from other dramas can be piled up. Oedipus clings to the role of upright king until the end of the play when the progressive revelations of the other characters drive him into the role of great criminal. Lear, having consciously resigned from the role of king, nevertheless because of his personal need dispositions expects to receive the same treatment as if he had not resigned. His daughters not only refuse to accept their former role of loyal subjects but also do not even accord him the treatment due the role of father. The ensuing conflict drives him mad. When we come to Hamlet, his negativism is clearly a desire to avoid accepting a new role. Up to the revelations of the ghost he had no doubt accepted the role of carefree young prince. The ghost tries to force him into that of avenger which is against the grain of his personality. His protest takes the form of the pseudo-role of madman from which no one can expect anything of him at all. Madness is actually social nihilism, the negation of role.

A third type of conflict is a conscious one between the different roles which make up an individual's social identity. The familiar struggle between love and duty is of this type. We have already seen Haimon as its victim. His solution is again negation of role by suicide. There is no solution for him in the struggle between son and lover. Many of Dostoievsky's characters slip from one role to another with bewildering rapidity. Dimitri, of *The Brothers Karamazov*, alternates between man of honor and libertine. His trial is a legalistic attempt to decide which is the real Dimitri. The hero of *Crime and Punishment* essays the role of superman, outside ordinary social norms, but can not sustain it and falls back into that of criminal. In contrast let us take the modern playwright Bertolt Brecht who specifically rejected suspense, identification and katharsis, wishing to keep his dramas cold, non-Aristotelian, and didactic. If we examine the character of Mother Courage in the play of that name, we see that she vacillates between the two roles of loving mother and grasping merchant. In one of the most effective scenes she condemns her son to death by bargaining too long. Thus Brecht, while not interested in the psychology of conflict between roles,

nevertheless uses this conflict to create bitterly ironic effects, as an example of what a society, of which he disapproves, does to the individual. The basic theme of *Peer Gynt* is an exposition of a narcissistic individual who tries role after role and discards them, always seeking his true self, but in the end learns that by never accepting a role in society, he has *no* true self; the stripping away of the final layers of the onion reveals nothing at all. Finally, a modern writer whose work is full of social meaning is Franz Kafka. K, the hero of *The Castle*, has but one goal and that is to define his role, to discover it. His actions seem to take place upon impulse or experimentally, yet he is always trying to make use of them in his struggle to establish himself in some socially accepted status. The role of land surveyor is the weapon by which he tries to batter his way in, his provisional acceptance of that of school janitor constitutes a sort of beachhead. He finds himself involved in conflicts when the villagers and castle officials either deny him any role or treat him in such a manner that his role becomes ambiguous and mysterious.

The refusal to treat another person in accordance with the role he believes is his can produce a very interesting type of conflict. *Richard II* is indeed one long poetic lament on the part of the king whose subjects refuse to treat him as he should be treated in the role of ruler. His justification is the divine right of kings but his unfortunate personality has placed him in conflict with the need dispositions of his subjects.

The most obvious form of conflict is a struggle between two people who are fairly consistent in their roles but whose roles are flatly contradictory. Such an antagonism of course reflects contradictions within society itself. When the protagonists are completely consistent, psychological interest tends to disappear and the drama becomes a propaganda piece. *Antigone* almost falls into this category. The crude melodrama in which a sympathetic character is wholly consistent in the role of hero and a hateful one in the role of villain amounts to the same thing.

What have we learned from the foregoing examples?

It becomes clear that men and women in a social relationship perceive each other as organized systems of behavior. This behavior

they either wish to influence or adjust to. In order that such behavior may be predictable and understandable, the normative processes of society have formulated it into what we have given the name of role. The concept of role is not the same as that of identity. The latter term suggests a description of an individual which includes the whole personality, it harks back to the old non-social conception of the isolated human soul. The word status comes nearer to role but it has been used mostly in an institutional or class context and does not lend itself easily to personal relationships. For the drama, the concept of role seems more exact and useful since we have shown it to be an excellent tool for analyzing conflict. If we consider the individual personality to be the specific set of internal relationships which results from adjustment to the necessary social roles plus a margin of non-conformity, the whole structure deriving its color from the specific experiences of the individual, then we can easily fit psychology into the picture. The latter science helps us to understand the reasons for the individual's acceptance or non-acceptance of other people's roles. In short we obtain insight into motivation. How internal and external conflicts (conscious or unconscious) are resolved takes us into the realm of value judgements. Again our analysis of roles permits us to make distinctions. Where the individual is in conflict with his role, we become aware of dissent from existing social norms and the whole problem of social deviance is made clear. Where the conflict is between roles, strains and tensions between institutions in a society are revealed. On the whole, it seems to the writer that the concept of social role is a useful contribution to the grammar of criticism.

We have only just begun to build up a closely reasoned body of theory in the social sciences. Its importance for literary criticism, as I see it, begins when it throws light upon human actions. Talcott Parsons' approach gives us something to stand on. It does not base itself upon Platonic absolutes or dissolve into undefined subjectivity. It is consistent with the relativism of contemporary scientific procedure. Above all, it emphasizes the meaning of man as a social animal, a meaning we can less and less afford to ignore.

Race of Angels—Jean Le Roy

On the Posthumously Published Journals of Jean Le Roy
with a Preface by Cocteau

ARNO KARLEN

JEAN LE ROY was killed by a bullet in the head at the age of twenty-three. That was over forty years ago. His death, across the frantic intervening years, is still moving to contemplate. The consolation is that like every artist he has left behind an echo in his work.

I discovered Jean Le Roy by accident two years ago when I was poking about the shelves of a second-hand bookstore in New York. The section of French books was full of the usual battered editions of Flaubert and France, Maeterlinck and Barrès. When I saw a thin volume for which Cocteau had written a preface, I pulled it out and looked at it. Its title was a strange and amusing pun, *Le Cavalier de Frise*. A *chevalier de frise* is a saw horse, such as carpenters use. But for *chevalier* was printed *cavalier*, a word that has passed into English with its meaning little altered. The title evokes an image of a saw-horseman, a cavalier with a plumed hat racing away on a wooden mount.

The book consisted of some poems and the last journal of Jean Le Roy, who had died near the end of World War I. Le Roy had been carrying these notes in his canteen while he worked on them between actions at the front. They were found on his body and forwarded to Cocteau, whose protégé he had been. Cocteau published them eleven years later with a preface that gives us a description of Le Roy:

I would have liked to cede my place at the beginning of this book to Guillaume Apollinaire. He liked Le Roy, admired him. He begged him to rest after such a long campaign. Jean thanked him, laughed, and set off again. Apollinaire is dead in his turn.

Jean Le Roy has left us at the age of twenty-three. A photograph taken during his last leave shows a schoolboy. Furthermore, he still used a schoolboy's vocabulary. For example, he said of a masterpiece that it was "really great."

Those who have had the joy of knowing him also remember having often heard him say, "it's terrific," leaning on the *r* in a certain way that illuminated the word like a Christmas tree.

Take off his helmet. You will see a David Copperfield, a Lucien Letinois.

Jean Le Roy signed up at the beginning of the war. He did it by means of recommendations and physical exercises. He served almost all the campaign under the orders and friendly high direction of Captain Dupuy (René Dalize) and received the *croix de guerre* and the *médaille militaire*.

After having witnessed the horrible death of his dear captain, Jean Le Roy went to work at his studies for the rank of officer. It is from that moment that our interminable friendship dates.

Since Christmas, 1917, we wrote to each other every day. He was going from one front to the other and, as he wanted to reassure us, in his letters the war became a sort of Fourth of July. "Nothing better than a good whacking of cannon," he said. And then, he didn't want to be bored.

Men worthy of living do not accept being bored. This disgust with boredom pushed many soldiers toward death. Le Roy found the depot boring, the calm sectors boring, being made prisoner boring. He jumped into battle, shouting and splashing himself as at a beach.

The letters ceased on April 24. His last letter had as a postscript, "Be calm, the future is sure." He never lied. I was used to believing him. I put his silence to the post office. After fifteen days I wrote to J. Buttet, his orderly. On May 17 I received the answer:

"It is my unfortunate duty to inform you. . . ."

These letters are terrible to receive. They amputate without putting you to sleep.

Jean had been killed on the 26th, between ten and eleven o'clock, by a bullet in the head, at Locre, where with his revolver he was alone protecting the withdrawal of his men.

The Unknown does not like poets. It struggles against the learned and against other artists. But it dreads poets most of all, who *divine* and who *speak*. That is why many poets die young.

Jean Le Roy was of this race of angels. Their presence on earth seems to be the result of a misdeal. They yearn for their original state. They seek stumblingly to rejoin it, and the Unknown has not ceased to retrieve them.

Besides, Jean Le Roy was young, handsome, good, brave, talented, pure, everything death loves.

We have just lost him. You have just lost him. The angels of the earth are espoused elsewhere. How hold them back? They themselves do not know. They slide rapidly, joyously to their destruction.

Cavalier de Frise is the title of one of Le Roy's best poems. I place at the beginning of the book this *enfant terrible*, reared back on a wooden horse.

I am reminded of a preface Cocteau wrote about Raymond

Radiguet, another of his protégés who died young. He said that once in a while God decides to touch man, and in order to do so He puts on gloves. Radiguet was such a glove of heaven. And when God withdraws His hand . . .

The extent to which Le Roy joined the pantheon of mythic figures who populate Cocteau's work can be seen in the similarity of the Jean Le Roy of the preface above and the hero of Cocteau's novel *Thomas the Imposter*.

Le Roy's last journal is a mixture of personal notes, observations made at the front, comments on poetry. Though only a dozen pages long, it gives a surprisingly complete portrait of the young poet. And always in mind while reading it is the thought that he was on the way to his death, a death that like Mozart's and Keats' and Radiguet's seemed not an accident but a special private destiny. For Le Roy, as for Apollinaire, the war was a miraculous and wonder-filled experience. It seemed the fireworks of an astounding industrial machine, a break in the skin of normal life, a new terrain where friendships quickly grew to fraternal love amid murder. Both came to view the war with growing horror and disillusion near the end, and the war killed them both.

Le Roy loved the men he fought with yet he never ceased to view them and the machinery of the army with cool removal. He noted bits of conversation, wrote comments on friends and the behavior of groups of men, described the moments of peace between slaughters:

The mud has made carapaces of our hoods, and the soldiers balance earthy heads on the bodies of blue turtles. The shells of Congo ooze will not dry out. In the hut, the armored beasts are singing. No longer the ballad of the rue de la Gaite but the melancholy song of blue turtles that yearn for prehistory. Sighs of hippos, tears of crocodiles, the floc-floc and cannon-shot of great rubber-clad paws stirring. Around the belly of the whale, in the six directions, the rippling of the thaw and the agony of the rats. The frogs smother in the mud, then everything dries up; it's a hill, and from then on a million little organisms become fossils. They become encrusted. Frogs, eternally immobile, their eyes open, stiff rats, soldiers with their mouths full of earth . . . death.

• • •

Study: Military gangrene, still richer in microbes. And the morale is excellent in the armies; that is perhaps the most pitiful fact, for it is not based

on confidence, nor is it a pantheist bliss, love of a normal and healthy life. It is habit, indifference, amelioration of the soldiers' lot, comparison with the hard life to the rear. They live entirely in the life of the company. The officer wants a stripe; the soldier's subsistence is assured with the minimum of effort, of energy. And that, alas, contents them. They are almost uninterested in the family in their country that suffers from the danger of invasion, of the trade that is rusting, of holy liberty itself. They have all been spending on forged checks. And that is war, Zarathustra.

The companionships of the front meant much to Le Roy, more than perhaps anything else in the war. These are the sudden and profound brotherhoods of danger and crisis that so many wrote of during the war, any war. Le Roy wrote many notes on them.

Not to die alone! . . . God of armies, if you want my skin then make me die in a great battle, with ten thousand comrades. I want to feel the afternoon passing on my belly. I do not want to be alone in a military graveyard. I must have my machine-gunners, and I will sleep near young boys with familiar names, Greliche, Montéléon, Sureau.

* * *

They call Corporal Miège "Jack" with affection. In my old company I was the one the right guys called "Jack." I have become "my own suitor." How sad that is! I am jealous of Jack Miège. I can't stand this impersonal militarism.

* * *

Emprin met again on a road. "We've grown old together." Of Sureau, "He was a damn good soldier. When you told him gently to do something, he did it. If it wasn't his turn he pointed it out, but he did it just the same." Of me, "You've been rejuvenated."

The greatest blow of the war was the death of Le Roy's captain. I would guess from what little is revealed in the journal that it was this more than anything else that began to fill Le Roy's journal with disillusion and with hatred for the war.

My captain often said, "Life is beautiful." He liked people to drink well, eat well, tell jokes. All that is dead, this pleasure in good things. The hero is rotten.

* * *

My captain, I see you in your helmet, stepping forth from a cloud into the glorious twilight. You hold your baton and hurry on, freed from duty for an interminable leave. Your great tread descends the slopes of the clouds, as I saw

you descend the light slopes of the war. It is another who led us to the valley of Souchez. You feared the evils that could have overtaken me.

* * *

The nights of cantonment in search of the division, the whole village sleeps and the barns are full of soldiers. Captain, my captain, come to bring me the sea wind. Down below the boats glide with all sails to the wind, at full stretch of their power. I remain alone to attest to this life. Friend, I will not betray you, but the voice is hesitant, the words difficult, my memory short.

And now Le Roy thought more and more of death. In one place he says simply, "I know death better than life." He often stopped to address dead comrades longingly.

You who so love life, you who dread and detest death with the bravura of ancient heroes, you who are nevertheless twenty years older than I, when you are sixty I will go to find you. I will remind you of our prodigious adventure, and I will ask you if you accept dying.

* * *

You will have been dead a thousand years. One day among all the days, at the heart of eternity, you will awaken. You will suddenly hear singing in your brain this musical phrase which for you was all the beauty of living, all the pleasure of your very youth, this phrase full of love as a shell is full of powder. You will be alone in your tomb; you will know that you are dead; for one hour you will be conscious of the irreparable. Alone . . . dead . . . The music will die away, and gently you will feel yourself return to nothingness.

* * *

They descended into hell, happy because they had lost their closest comrades. They were madly in love with life, proud of having escaped. The more they had seen fall and dwell immobile in the mud, the more they felt full of gaiety and gratitude.

Still, youth and joy and the simple capacity for love of the palpable win out. The war brings exaltations, new tonalities of life, new men and events and celebrations of the simple fact that one's life has not yet ended.

The years of the war were so long, so charged with events, that each new season seemed a new life after metempsychosis. You had had the time between one spring and another to forget that springs existed. The renewed was newer, and the dead leaves deader. The summer of the year seemed the summer of life, and winter was the same as death.

* * *

A flask of Chianti. I attached a sprig of mimosa to its neck. I drink from the bottle and the mimosa gives off its scent. Smell of leather, of a woman's glove.

• • •

Remiremont. Mid-Lent at the retreat illuminated under the Gothas. Music of madmen, the odors of massacre. I was drunk, and I was making cigars flower on the points of bayonets. Sureau and Montéléon. The aviators were returning from battle, their eyes burned by the powder. We embraced them; champagne, dances, festival.

He does not stop noting the people who pass by, picking up the curious little stories that come to him:

A girl from D-le-F. During the Boche occupation she did not carry her money with her. Expecting to be violated, she feared "losing fortune along with honor."

Amid all the misery of war, the growing confusion and sadness at seeing his friends killed and land ravaged, a mad military nightmare, he says simply, "Intelligence is nothing. Youth, serenity of heart, honest gaiety, they are everything." There is no better illustration of Le Roy's temperament. But because he was so, the war was teaching him things he would have been happier not knowing, shaking his belief in a life he had found beautiful and loved exuberantly. There are signs in the journal of a terrible disillusionment taking place. Had Le Roy survived the war, he might have survived himself.

Most of the journal is about the war, but the ten-odd entries dealing with poetry and criticism, besides their intrinsic value as criticism, add depth and special interest to the rest. Without them the journal would risk being treated like so many diaries from the front. But the extraordinary grasp of poetry that Le Roy shows sharpens our attention to the rest, reminding us that we are dealing with a mind whose least observations are likely to have rare penetration, rare breadth. The first entry in the entire journal is:

Decadence for an art: to be pushed to its extreme limits. Music becomes painting, poetry becomes music, painting becomes music and poetry, poetry becomes painting, etc. . . .

Le Roy's generation was reacting against men like Wagner, in whose works the boundaries of art were dissolving. But Le Roy was much more aware than most men of his time where this was leading. The third and fourth entries are prophetic:

The impasse of modern poetry. Now there is only a great white wall which the best among our contemporaries defile with *graphiti*. Claudel, Jammes and the Catholics, nose in air, incapable of holding a pick with which to breach the wall, have sat down on the last milestone.

* * *

Work, work! The war! We as well have scribbled *graphiti* on the wall with our pencils instead of working. The occasion seemed right, nevertheless, for making use of explosives and blowing out a whole section of the wall.

The white wall of which Le Roy speaks is the prospect of art after the breakdown of traditional Western values, the Greek assumption that there is an order in the cosmos awaiting discovery by man. After the Symbolists, with the birth of Dada, European poets realized that if the traditional absolutes of the West collapsed, the aesthetics and inherited artistic forms that were threads in that fabric went with them. Psychoanalysis, relativity theory, the death of the orderly universe—these meant the end of poetry as it had always been known.

If there is no universal truth, there is no universally true poetic statement. Truth then has become an arbitrary personal predilection, as variable as men. If there is no common and knowable human nature, there is no reliable poetic. A white wall before the artist. Scribble. Aim pot-shots in the dark and pray you hit something.

We have come to a terribly difficult point. We must give up describing, for with one stroke the visible world can be effaced like a decalcomania.

* * *

It is no longer necessary for us to deform, it isn't worthy of us. Nor is it any more necessary to believe that we can create. So we must write novels of adventure, or something else. In the *Cap de Bonne-Espérance* there is something of the adventure novel, and something else. That is the singing of the new canticle.

Le Roy was working toward a personal solution in this journal. He wanted to return to the world about him with all the power of

his inner vision—not to let himself fall into the self-circling aesthetic of an Huyssman, a Mallarmé, a Hoffmannsthal . . . the possible road to sterility or madness, a road few can walk without succumbing.

Not to forget, when old age is there, that the whole world, the material world, ought to fecundate the idea, under pain of drying up. Example: the Catholic Claudel ends in his religious hypocrisies—Whitman, the pantheist, ends in enumeration.

• • •

One must depart from the principle that the starry vault is the ultimate vault. Otherwise no construction will stay standing, there is no more terra firma.

• • •

You must be diverse, multiple, infinitely varied. You would have to write, in a thousand different ways, quantities of works of all sorts, to explore in every sense and to take a stand.

Le Roy had an idea for a newspaper by and for poets. It would hold important nothing but what is directly human and non-institutional. It would contain none of the conventionalized fustian and fakery that so often pass for Big Events. It shows a poet's preference for concrete details, for specific news over abstractions.

In the Kazan district, four peasants, judged by other peasants, were condemned to be burned alive. The whole village was present at the execution. In the Siberian area of Barnapol, four very young people were condemned for theft: three were publicly decapitated. The handsomest was tortured and finally his head was crushed. The newspapers are thus full of a sufficiently squandered kind of life. Nice headlines. News brief: In Greece, in Poland . . . Anyway the echo is rarely beautiful.

What Mycaenas will found the great daily newspaper relating only the divers facts of the whole world? The speeches of parliamentarians will not be transcribed, nor the voyages of chiefs of state, nor administrative moves. But what a source for the theater, for poetry!

What such a newspaper might have been like we will probably never know. What Le Roy's genius might have made of the dough of experience, we can only guess. For he died shortly after these paragraphs were written—too young.

I think that Le Roy actually hated death much more than he feared it. Most men fear death because it means leaving earth before

a promise is fulfilled. Yeats said life is a continual preparation for something that never happens. But we cannot help believing that if we could live just a little longer "it," whatever "it" is, would happen; that promise would be fulfilled. But Le Roy hated death because it would keep him from his work. For every artist, his work is his destiny.

What despair ought to be yours in the tomb, and how you should wrestle with the void to make fly a vital spark, a gesture, a thought. But the worm eats you, and you will be completely dead.

Le Roy knew that a poet must have time to grow from enumeration to investing with meaning.

The smallness of the athletic champion is in always being subject to cancellation by a number. The hero is beyond number, and alone on his road.

Le Roy was beginning on that road when he died. He knew it and wanted to live, to work. But near the end he talked more of death, the horror of the war angering him and, in a way, making him an intimate of death. One might say that even as he praised life and wanted to live, he was serving an apprenticeship with death.

But fittingly he who had written that youth and serenity of heart and honest gaiety are everything, did not die with night on his lips. The last words of the journal are:

THE DIAPASON GIVES THE LA; THE COMPASS GIVES THE NORTH; MY HEART GIVES YOUR NAME.

Whose name, we do not know. We could easily say, death. I prefer to think it was a girl about whom he planned to write a poem, or a comrade at the front.

Shortly after, he was killed. Too young, but he had already struck at least one spark from the void.

The Agony of E. E. Cummings

MICHAEL L. LASSER

RELATIVELY FEW POETS formulate complete philosophies by which they try to live their lives; many more are concerned with some sort of critical theorizing by which they react to their individual situations. Usually lacking the inclusiveness of philosophy, these theories offer a general point of view by which the poet can view, interpret, and react to his situation via his work.

E. E. Cummings is a poet like this. He has never formulated a specific, fully thought out, wide-scoped philosophy of life and art. But a fundamental picture of Cummings comes to us from his feeling and thinking as expressed in his fiction, essays, lectures, and poems. It is from this base of idea and emotion that his art has sprung.

In the early nineteen-twenties, when he was causing the first of many raised eyebrows, Cummings published a number of essays in the now-defunct *Vanity Fair* magazine. In "The Agony of the Artist (With a Capital A)," he names the three kinds of artists which exist in the twentieth century. Although he speaks in terms of painting, it is relatively easy to apply his criteria to literature.

Among the *ultra-successful* members of the art world are found two specific kinds, the commercial artist who paints for advertising purposes, and the fashionable painter who is paid vast sums for making "unbeautifully rich women look richly beautiful." What is wrong with these artists is the same thing that is wrong with ninety per cent of the human race: they believe in extensity, they believe "that two readers make a poem better than one reader . . . And all [this] palavar has nothing to do with art [because a work of art] lives in itself."

Secondly, there are *academicians*. Patient and plodding, they are happy if they do something which is just like something else. Cummings issues a strong protest against these artists who, like "most people," do not seek the aesthetic; in their lack of enthusiasm for this quality, which shall be defined later, they seek the opposite of

aesthetic: the anaesthetic. In American society, the anaesthetics include radio (television), motion pictures, and best sellers.

Cummings condemns the academicians on grounds of security and intensity. The urge for security, which is based on conformity and perfect realism in art, is limited to slaves. No really free man ever dreams of security because it is stifling; it is equality at the expense of liberty and, as such, is not worth the price. As for intensity, the so-called artists of today are completely unaware of its existence, despite the fact that it is intensity which makes art what it is. That is why there are so few "real" artists. "A man who lives intensely," says Cummings, "really lives, but an [academician] who lives to be a hundred and twenty doesn't necessarily live at all. You read detective stories to kill time. If time were any good, why kill it?"

In *The Enormous Room*, Count Braggard, who has academic training, tells of his method for finding a good landscape to paint: look through a rectangle cut in a sheet of paper. This destruction of intensity, of the organic life of the world, disgusts Cummings' romantic sensitivity.

Cummings, as an artist and a man, is the personification of the final type of artist. It must be said, to his credit, that he has made a sincere and largely successful effort to live by his self-imposed standards. Perhaps, say Horace Gregory and Marya Zaturenska, the major cause of his retention of the romantic attitude is the influence of New England, where he was born and raised. His world of conventions is too small for complete moral order, but Harvard and Cambridge follow wherever he goes, even into his satire. He is still the "old grad" who keeps alive the rivalry with Yale:

a tear within his stern blue eye,
upon his firm white lips a smile,
one thought alone: to do or die
for God for country and for Yale

(*Collected Poems*, #149)

His father and mother, who were also strong influences, wanted him to teach at Harvard, but that sort of life was not possible for him. He tried to escape by bohemianism, but even in Greenwich Village (he still maintains an apartment on Patchen Place) he remained loyal to

his New England traditions.

Cummings tried to escape his natural heritage and failed. Even the many things he castigates, the "prurient philosophers" of "La Guerre" for instance, represent New England's concentrated, middle-class conservatism. No matter how he tried to escape, the roots of his tradition were too deep within him, and still are. Reacting against the tradition, he turned partially into himself and payed the price of loneliness:

nothing is more exactly terrible than
to be alone in the house

(*Poems*, p. 196)

He tried to escape by turning to whores and profanity, by rejoicing in flowers, and by wallowing in sex, shocking himself out of his Puritan background. In 1926, he praised the French Communists because they were being abused by the government. But he damned the "kumrads" nine years later for being inhabitants of a land where only sameness is normal.

In both cases, noted John Finch in an excellent 1939 article, he fought the enemies of conservatism, joining, albeit for different reasons, his native New England in asserting individual rights against the remotest threats. Cummings is a man desperately trying to escape the noose of convention, and, at the same time, proudly asserting the chains of tradition. More a "Thoreau" than an "Emerson" he retreated in order to live his ideals. This artist has nothing to do with the success of the advertiser, or with the tranquility of Braggard. Instead he is intimately concerned with agony!

The agony which Cummings experiences does not, as one might expect, arise out of the fact that the artist has little hope of recognition and appreciation. Cummings' conscious use of syntactical, grammatical, and linguistic complexities shows his disdain for complete communication; the reader must come to the poet too. Rather his agony comes from his own personal struggle to discover, to appreciate, and to express himself. As he says in *Him*, "an artist, a man, a failure, MUST PROCEED." With success, as any *unworld* comprehends it, Cummings has essentially nothing to do. His growth is in terms, not of succeed, but of proceed. And his procedure is based on

faith of the strongest and deepest kind:

We are human beings; for whom birth is a supremely welcome mystery, the mystery of growing; the mystery which happens only and whenever we are faithful to ourselves.

(*Collected Poems*, Introduction)

To grow is a fate.

People may dare to live, people may be taught . . . death; noone can learn growing. Noone can dare to grow. Growing equals that any reason or motive or unreason becomes every other unreason or reason or motive. Here exists no sign, no path, no distance, and no time.

(*Eimi*)

Better worlds (I suggest) are born, not made; and their birthdays are the birthdays of individuals.

(*i: Six Nonlectures*)

Thus the world is constantly reborn through the faith of individuals, by the expression of artists who must first be individuals.

Once the individual has acquired faith and true understanding, once he has been reborn as the potential artist, how does he bring about the act of creation? First he must unlearn what he has previously learned in order to know himself because "every being is in and of himself . . . illimitable; but the essence of his . . . illimitability is precisely its uniqueness." In other words, Cummings does not know that he knows, he *merely* feels deeply.

The lack of complete feeling is thinking, a "disease" which cannot affect the real poet. Cummings cannot believe in certain things because he never ceases to feel them. "Things of this sort . . . are no longer things; they, and the us which they are, equals A Verb; an IS," he wrote in *The Enormous Room*. This is the material of poetry.

The poet, on the other hand, "is somebody to whom things made matter very little—somebody who is obsessed by Making." Fortunately for us, people—"backward, unscientific, possibly even idiotic"—still exist, for whom living is more than the unalive avoidance of discomfort. These people are the artists who, in the agony of finding themselves, develop a strong contempt for all authority. Cummings shows signs of it as early as 1922:

'Est-ce-que vous detestez les boches?'

'Non. J'aime beaucoup les francais.'

Out of this agony, this search for self-knowledge, emerges the artist whose nature, Cummings implies, is one of isolation from humanity and communion with the self. Cummings, recognizing the artistic sacrifice so necessary to the meaningful creation of art, turns to his audience and for the only time in his life, asks for understanding—but on his terms:

Do not hate and fear the artist in yourselves, my fellow citizens. Honour him and love him. Love him truly—do not try to possess him. Trust him as nobly as you trust tomorrow.

Only the artist in yourselves is more truthful than the night.

(*"Is Something Wrong"*)

[The artist] outwardly and inwardly affirms that, whereas a world rises to fall, a spirit descends to ascend.

(*i: Six Nonlectures*)

Art is the creation of the artist—"always the more beautiful answer who asks a more beautiful question"—after he has successfully developed his individuality. It is now important to explore the nature of this art that is so much a part of its creator.

Cummings has attempted to define art a number of times but, because of its ineffably self-ish nature, definition has proven to be an extremely difficult task. Eventually he expressed his definition in terms of the new associations which he awards to relatively meaningless words. By so doing, Cummings enables the reader to feel his meaning—a great accomplishment.

The only way I can define art is in a negative way; a poem is something that can't be translated. To define a thing is to limit it and a poem is infinite.

(*Writer Observed*, Harvey Breit)

This is where Cummings starts—certainly not an encouraging beginning. But if we allow ourselves seemingly to break continuity for a moment, the problem will begin to alleviate itself:

Miracles are to come. With you I have a remembrance of miracles; they are by somebody who shall be continually reborn, a human being; somebody

who said to those near him, when his fingers would not hold a brush, 'tie it into my hand'—.

(*Collected Poems, Introduction*)

More than an affirmation of miracles, the passage is an explicit statement of Cummings' spirit of creation—one of the most vital statements of his life. Around it clusters every creative word he has ever written. Without this core, his poems seem meaningless bunches of words. With it, the theory of his art, the truth of his poetry, the meaningfulness of his life, is accessible. Now he can begin to offer a definition in positive terms:

Art is a mystery.

A mystery is something immeasurable. In so far as every man may be immeasurable, art is the mystery of every man; and art is every mystery of nature. Nothing measurable can be alive; nothing which is not alive can be art; nothing which cannot be art is true; and everything untrue doesn't matter

Art is a mystery; all mysteries have their source in a mystery of mysteries who is love: the loving artist whose way must lie through his art.

(*i: Six Nonlectures*)

Cummings has reached a point where he can face the unbelievable, or art, and this steady stare on his part produces a feeling that can only be called aesthetic (perhaps this will clear up the confusion that could not be completely resolved in the first part of the essay). This feeling is not mysterious, rather it is incredible. As Cummings puts it, "It is as if two feelings—exultation and humility—should completely mingle while remaining perfectly separate." Thus we are faced with an artistic paradox—a surface contradiction, beneath which lies a unity of truth. That truth is seen in the art of E. E. Cummings:

one's not half two. It's two are halves of one:
which halves reintegrating, shall occur
no death and any quantity; but then
all numerable mosts the actual more

alive we're alive)
we're wonderful one times one

(1 X 1)

We have seen why E. E. Cummings creates, how he can create, and what he creates; and we have called it art. Cummings tells us why it is art: "because it is *alive*. We must create with today and let all the art schools . . . go hang themselves . . . since whatever art stands for is whatever cannot be learned."

Out of art's aliveness comes a light-hearted comparison that has a serious result. Art and burlesk are alike because they are both alive. And this, believe it or not, leads Cummings to his statement of technique:

I can express it in 15 words, by quoting *The Eternal Question And Immortal Answer of burlesk*, viz. "Would you hit a woman with a child?—No, I'd hit her with a brick."

Like the burlesk comedian, I am abnormally fond of that precision which creates movement.

(*Is 5, Introduction*)

From the statement of technique and from the still-unfinished definition of art, we understand that poetry can only be a matter of being, not doing. Because individuals are organisms and multitudes are unalive, a confusion between doing and being can arise on the mass level. Cummings recognizes this and comments effectively:

When you confuse art with propaganda, you confuse an Act of God with something which can be turned on and off like the hot water faucet—

("Is Something Wrong")

. . . so far as I am concerned, poetry . . . was and is and forever will be strictly and distinctly a question of individuality.

(*i: Six Nonlectures*)

There can be no real confusion on the part of the individual who realizes, in his wholeness, that art cannot be acquired. Either you have it, or you don't—and that is it! Cummings affirms those who are artists, and no one else. He realizes the narrowness of his criteria for affirmation of the individual, but he readily affirms it. There is no room for hesitation or incompleteness in the artist who has grown through his agony:

Thanks to I dare say my art I am able to become myself. [People who are not artists] don't become. I feel nothing happens to them; I feel negation becomes of them.

... you probably consider your art of vital consequence—
 Improbably.
 —To the world?
 To Myself.

(*The Enormous Room*, Introduction)

The artist can now live and create. What is left for Cummings is a close, open appraisal of the value of poetry in life:

... all poetry (cannot) begin to indicate the varieties of selfhood; and consequently of self-transcendence. All (my poems) hope to do is to suggest that particular awareness without which no human spirit ever dreams of rising from such unmysteries as thinking and believing and knowing.

(i: *Six Nonlectures*)

He affirms the intensity with which the poet and his poetry must exist in themselves and for each other; in each other and for themselves:

I believe [in the] importance of intensity in art, which is what Pound was saying [when he wrote]: "What matters is not the idea a man holds, but the depth at which he holds it."

(*Writer Observed*, Harvey Breit)

Unfortunately society as a whole does not view art in the same light. The great delusion is:

that something with a title on the outside and a great many closely printed pages on the inside is a book—and . . . that a book is what anybody can write and nobody can't publish and somebody won't go to jail for and everybody will understand.

(By E. E. Cummings)

A book is, for Cummings, "a new way of being alive." Again and again he upholds his definition and repudiates the delusion of society. In his untitled volume, *By E. E. Cummings*, there is, of course, no title, the frontis-piece is blank, and the print is of the size found in primers. But it is a humorous, sardonic, healthy robustness that is found inside the covers.

In advocating the joy of life and the sovereignty of the individual, Cummings eventually attacks didacticism in art. There exists, he says, "the fact that any number of simple folks . . . inhabit one and the same blunder . . . the blunder of thinking that people can be improved." His case is best presented in *Anthropos, the future of*

art. The key to Cummings' thought is contained in the title.

This short play, which is a scathing attack on didactic art, is set in a cave. Three infrahuman creatures, G, O, and D, watch a drawing take shape on the wall. Trying to find a slogan for it so that it can be fed to the masses, they eventually choose "Evolution" over others like "Time is money," "Nothing succeeds like success," and "Get wise to yourself." The slogans have nothing to do with the painting, which is not finished when they've named it, but that is not important.

After the slogan has been impressed upon the infrahuman dwarfs, the cavemen are startled by the sight of the artist, of whom they had not been aware. He tells them that he is creating a mammoth, and is greeted with disbelief. Unable to feel the impossible, they jeer him with cries of civilization, progress, and Ford. The artist shrugs, opens the covering of the cave, and sneaks out past the mammoth. The cavemen go to see if the mammoth is there. As they open the cave-covering, darkness suddenly sets in. The mammoth exists in the artist's individuality, for its own sake. The slogan-writers cannot see it, so they return to their fire and continue the infrahuman chatter. The play closes on the same lines with which it opens; they thought the artist mad, but they are not even human.

In reviewing and interpreting Cummings' opinions, we have seen a poet come into being. And now we can turn and ask him, who are you? Cummings can proudly and affirmingly answer in a way that shows us that he has paid the price and won, at least for himself, the fight for poetry:

. . . wherever our so-called civilization has slithered, there's no punishment for unbeing. But if poetry is your goal, you've got to forget about punishments and about rewards . . . etcetera ad infinitum and remember one thing only: that it's you—nobody else—who determines your destiny and decides your fate. Nobody can be alive for you; nor can you be alive for anybody else.

I am someone who proudly and humbly affirms that love is the mystery-of-mysteries, and that nothing measurable matters "a very good God damn": that "an artist, a man, a failure" is no mere whenfully accreting mechanism, but a giving eternal complexity—niether some soullness and heartless ultrapredatory infra-animal and believing automation, but a naturally and miraculously whole human being—a feeling illimitable individual; whose only happiness is to transcend himself, *whose only agony is to grow*.

(i: *Six Nonlectures*, italics mine)

(continued from page 2)

"The first anthology of Turkish writing to be published in the United States, this collection of poetry and prose is Turkish in flavor but universal in theme. The break with tradition which began with the Ataturk reforms, nowhere more evident than in the field of the creative arts, is well demonstrated in these pages, which reflect the social consciousness as well as the realism of the Turkish Republic. Gifted, intuitive translators have done an outstanding job, and the whole package is neatly wrapped up by Kemal Karpat in his succinct survey of the development of modern Turkish literature."

Rebecca H. Latimer writes in *The Middle East Journal* (Summer 1961): "... judging by the quality of the work presented in these pages [an anthology of Turkish writing] is long overdue."

"Most of these Turkish writers are young. Almost exactly half are in their thirties. Of the forty-three writers and artists—the work of eleven painters is shown—only three were born before 1910. Here is a dramatic illustration of the decisive break with tradition and the past that was brought about by the downfall of the Sultanate and the establishment of the Republic in 1923. Nowhere was this break sharper than in the field of writing. The Ottomans had clung to the French school in poetry—elegance, mysticism and obscurity.

"In this collection of ten short stories, headed by a section from a book by Turkey's leading young

novelist, Yaşar Kemal, there is not one example of the elegant, the obscure or the mystical. Among the thirty-two poets represented, elegance and mysticism are not primary targets . . . the translators have been more than adequate, they have been inspired . . .

"... the collection is stimulating, even exciting. The flavor of the writing will be as strange to most Americans as that of Turgenev and Chekov. The work is indeed unmistakably Turkish, which is one reason for its tremendous impact. Some of the stories may even appear shocking to the American reader, since they deal with that brutalized poverty that Erskine Caldwell, in this country, has chosen for his special province. . . . As for the poetry, its appeal is more universal and in this collection every reader will find poems that speak directly to his heart."

His excellency Ambassador C. S. Jha, Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, writes concerning the India number of the *Review* (Summer 1961):

"This is indeed an excellent publication, compiling as it does some of the greatest contemporary Indian writers. . . . I am sure that your labour of love will help in the promotion of intellectual understanding of contemporary India . . . Fairleigh Dickinson University [publisher of the *Review*] has done a great service to my country that will earn high appreciation in all quarters. My heartiest congratulations!"

(continued from page 1)
 edited *Twelve Spanish American Poets* and *The Selected Poems of Bertolt Brecht*.

ALBERT HERZING, poet and a member of the English faculty of Fairleigh Dickinson University, has published in the *Kenyon*, *Sewanee*, *Partisan* and *Western Reviews*; in *Poetry*, *Epoch*, *Botteghe Oscure*, and *New World Writing V*; and several anthologies.

ASTRID IVASK (b. 1926, Riga, Latvia), refugee from Communism since 1944, studied classical and modern philology at the Philipps-University, Marburg-Lahn, Germany. In the United States since 1949, she is currently teaching Russian at St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota. She has published verse in Latvian and translates from Estonian and Lithuanian.

ARNO KARLEN, Philadelphia, has translated Cocteau's *The Essay of Indirect Criticism*, is collaborating on a translation of novellas by Hermann Hesse, has published his own fiction and poetry in magazines and hard cover, and will have a volume of short stories, *White Apples*, out this year (Lippincott).

R. A. LAFFERTY, Iowa-born, has lived most of his life in Oklahoma. He began to write three years ago, has published ten stories and written six unpublished novels, "several of which are still going to make it." Southwest United States history is his major interest.

MICHAEL L. LASSER has taught at Brooklyn College and is currently teaching at Rutgers Preparatory School, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

LOWELL MATSON has taught and directed theatres at the Universities of Florida, Iowa, Kansas City, Purdue and elsewhere. The author of numerous articles on the theatre and the drama, he edited *The Off Broadway Theatre* for Random House (1959). Currently he is a literary agent in New York City and a member of the English faculty of Fairleigh Dickinson University.

TAPATI MOOKERJI (1922-) has been writing in English and Bengali since she was twelve, when her first book was published. She is the author of short stories, poetry, novels and plays. She edits *Roshni*, official journal of the All India Women's Conference, and is the first woman in her province to hold the post of Honorary Magistrate of the First Class in Jamshedpur, where she lives with her husband and two children.

SAMUEL FRENCH MORSE (1916-), Milton, Massachusetts, has published two books of poems, *Time of Year* and *The Scattered Causes*. As literary adviser to the estate of Wallace Stevens, he edited Stevens' *Opus Posthumous* and the Vintage selection of Stevens' poems, and is currently preparing a critical biography as an American Council of Learned Societies fellow.

GORHAM MUNSON is a member of Fairleigh Dickinson University's English faculty and director of its annual summer Writers Conference. He is the author of ten books, including a biography of Robert Frost, a study of the New Humanism of More and Babbitt, and *Penobscot: Down East Paradise*.

CYNTHIA OZICK (b. 1926, New York City) has published fiction, essays and poems (*Botteghe Oscure*, *Evergreen Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *San Francisco Review*, etc.).

KOSTES PALAMAS, noted Greek poet, was first published in the United States as early as 1921 (*A Hundred Voices and Other Poems*, The Harvard University Press). His play, *Royal Blossom*, was published by Yale University Press. Permission to publish "Two Parables" has been given by H. E. Ambassador Christian X. Palamas, heir to the Palamas estate and Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations.

JOHN M. RIDLAND (1933-), Upland, California, has published poems in the *New Yorker*, *Atlantic*, *Virginia Quarterly Review* and elsewhere and has won several prizes for his work. Born of British parents, now an American citizen, he served in the U.S. Army (1954-5) and is currently studying for his doctorate in English at the Claremont Graduate School.

LAWRENCE STURHAHN, New York City, is assistant director of the motion picture, "The Miracle Worker," now in production. His stories have appeared in *Paris Review*, *Northwest Review*, *New Mexico Review* and elsewhere.

CAHIT SITKI TARANCI (1911-1956), Turkish poet, was at once sympathetic to conventional forms and an admirer of the French symbolists.

MARGUERITE YOUNG, a member of the English faculty of Fairleigh Dickinson University, is the author of *Prismatic Ground* and *Moderate Fable* (both poetry), *Angel in the Forest* (prose study of Utopias), and *Miss MacIntosh, My Darling* (novel to be published by Scribners). She has published in many magazines (*Kenyon Review*, *Partisan Review*, *New Republic*, *Botteghe Oscure*, *New World Writing*, *Mademoiselle*, *Vogue*, etc.), and she has received many awards and fellowships (A.A.U.W., American Academy of Arts and Letters, Guggenheim, Rockefeller, etc.).

Editorial Notes

(continued from inside front cover)

the writer-teacher as to the enquiring student. And by serving artists, universities also serve themselves.

That universities frequently fail in the writer-teacher relationship is unfortunately true. Now that the writer-in-residence has become fashionable, sometimes even a public relations gimmick, universities sometimes forget that the writer's function on a campus is not identical with that of the professional teacher. He is there primarily to demonstrate by his presence, his testimony and his work that the creative life is the essence of civilization and, in one way or another, both useful and exhilarating in personal experience. The writer is usually a good teacher—and he should always teach—but within the field and in the ways of his competence. Deplorably, universities sometimes regard the writer as simply one more "body" on the faculty, oblige him to teach too many courses to too many students who may or may not have an interest in or talent for the subject; he is often bedeviled with drudgeries such as the correcting of tedious themes by freshmen who, after twelve years of schooling, have yet to learn how to write a simple declarative sentence. There are universities that publicize their "creative faculty," but neglect to provide them with the grants-in-aid for creative work, however significant, that are given for routine research, however unimportant.

Universities are not wholly to blame for these confused conditions. Few of them possess endowments or operating budgets geared to the creative life. Their historic task has been and is the conservation, dissemination and advancement of learning. Only yesterday, they extended

their domain to include the creative arts; naturally, they still find it easier to secure financial support for a professor of salesmanship or nuclear physics than for a professor of poetry.

In spite of these limitations, many universities here and abroad provide congenial conditions for the creative writer. Sometimes these conditions are too idyllic. One institution harbored a poet-in-residence at a fabulous salary and obliged him to do nothing but reside, in the fond hope that his mere presence, by way of some spiritual osmosis, would enliven and enrich campus culture. At the end of two weeks, the poet begged for a course, a seminar, at least a few students with whom he could talk. Not all writers are at ease on a campus, but the many who are, or could be, are eager to participate actively in academic life: they are eager that, through their teaching or other assignment, their creative work will give special significance to their university association. Simultaneously, universities, as they increasingly annex the creative arts, are learning how to provide conditions that draw on the richest resources of artists themselves.

This University Number of *The Literary Review* will not conclude the argument of college teaching versus creative talent. But by illustrating the point that campus and creative life do frequently aid and abet each other, we hope it will encourage colleges and universities to accelerate their interest in the creative artist. In the meantime, a 21-gun salute to the many writer-teachers who have contributed to *The Literary Review* and who, by their presence on campuses, have helped to bring learning and letters into a lively fellowship.

University Number

Cynthia Ozick

John M. Ridland

Kartar Singh Duggal

Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı

Byron Colt

The

Literary

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